

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 2 JANUARY 18, 1999

Clinton impeachment crisis deepens

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The impeachment crisis facing U.S. president William Clinton has deepened and does not seem to be under anyone's control. Whether Clinton will be found guilty and removed from office, forced to resign, or retain his post after being censured is an open question. This turn of events is a reflection of the growing instability of the world capitalist system and the decline of confidence in its leading figures, not only among millions of working people but among the rulers themselves.

The drive to unseat Clinton is led mainly by rightist politicians. Their main weapon is the "cultural war." This is a term ultra-rightist Patrick Buchanan popularized in 1992. It describes an ideological offensive aimed at reversing affirmative action, school desegregation, a woman's right to choose abortion, and other gains working people made in struggle, and for some at carving the cadre of an incipient fascist movement in the process. Sensing what the real target of the impeachment assault is, a majority among working people — especially among

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Washington fires more missiles at Iraq, admits 'inspectors' were spies

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. fighter jets fired air-to-air missiles at Iraqi planes flying over southern Iraq January 5. The incident was the third military strike by Washington since the December 16-19 bombing of Iraq by U.S. and British forces that destroyed schools, hospitals, grain depots, and private homes as well as military sites. Meanwhile, Washington has been forced to admit that the United Nations "weapons inspectors" snooping around Iraq were in fact spies.

Two U.S. Air Force F-15 jets fired missiles at Iraqi MIG planes and two Navy F-14 jets launched a volley of shots on Iraqi MIGs that flew into the "no-fly" zone Washington has imposed in southern Iraq. The U.S. government established such zones there and in the north of the country after the 1991 Gulf slaughter, supposedly to protect Kurds in northern Iraq and Shiite Muslims in the south from attacks by the Iraqi military.

After the four-day bombing assault in December, French jets stopped patrolling the southern "no-fly" zone. Paris had ended its participation in enforcing the no-fly zone in northern Iraq in 1996 after Washington launched a bombing attack.

There are mounting pressures on the U.S. rulers to lift the sanctions strangling 22 million Iraqi people. Moscow, Paris, Beijing,

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Black farmers plan rally against discrimination

Consent decree in lawsuit is 'settlement, not justice'

BY KEN MORGAN
AND STU SINGER

TILLERY, North Carolina, — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced an agreement January 5 to settle the class-action lawsuit brought by thousands of Black farmers charging the department with decades of racist discrimination. The consent decree is an attempt to end the historic suit against the USDA. It was scheduled to go to trial February 1. The settlement, which has received widespread media coverage, is an acknowledgment by the government of the truth of claims by Black farmers that they were illegally denied loans and access to USDA programs.

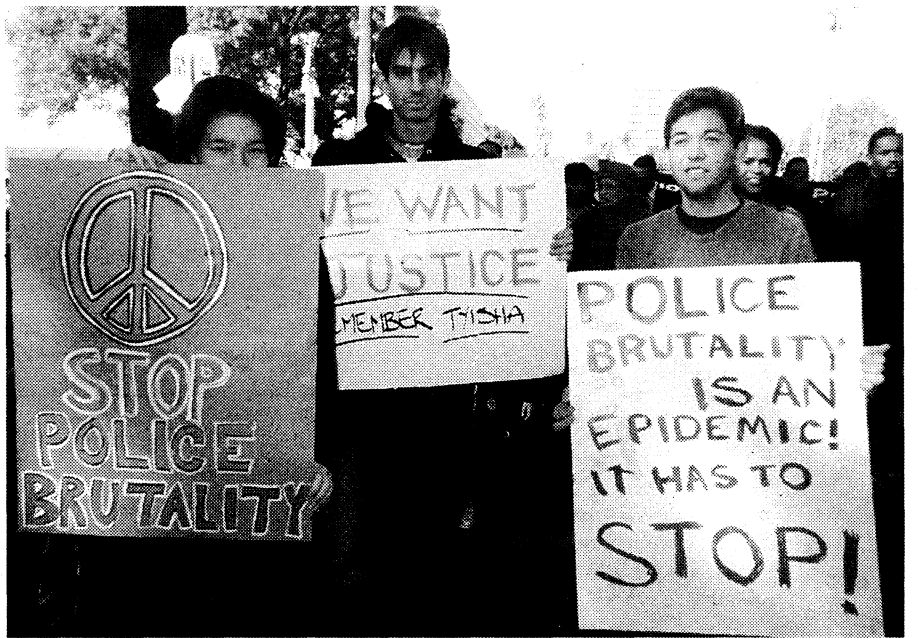
Under the agreement, the USDA may have to pay as much as \$300 million depending on how many Black farmers meet the terms of the consent decree. Many Black farmers say the settlement is inadequate and it does not address the continuing discrimination by the Agriculture Department. They say it will not reverse the drastic decline in the number of Black farmers.

"It's a settlement, not justice," said farm leader Gary Grant at a meeting of Black farmer activists January 6 in this northeastern North Carolina town. The meeting mapped out plans to protest the settlement, including a call for a national demonstration at the federal courthouse in Washington on March 2 when a "fairness hearing" is scheduled on the consent decree.

"This is not just a fight about money. This is about justice. We are our brother's keep-

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500 protest cop killing in California



Militant/Mark Friedman

BY CRAIG HONTIS

RIVERSIDE, California — Five hundred demonstrators marched through this Los Angeles-area town January 4 to protest the police killing of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller. The action was organized by a coalition of Riverside religious, civil rights groups, and family members. An-

gry shouts against the police punctuated the march, and when one speaker at the rally stated that "not all cops are bad," many demonstrators responded with shouts of disagreement. Early in the morning December 28, Tyisha Miller pulled into a gas station with a flat tire

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Steelworkers stand firm against Kaiser's union-busting moves

BY PHIL DUZINSKI
AND LAURA GARZA

GRAMERCY, Louisiana — Workers picketing the Kaiser Aluminum plant here show determination to fight against the bosses' union-busting proposals as a strike

by members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) enters its fourth month. Some 3,000 workers are on strike nationwide against Kaiser, about 350 in Gramercy and the others in Ohio and Washington State. These reporters visited the picket line De-

cember 28 and found spirits high, despite word that the most recent contract proposal by the company is even worse than the last offer made on September 30, and includes different conditions for each local area.

Sam Thomas, grievance committee chairman of USWA Local 5702, said they had just received the phone book-sized document detailing some of the takebacks the company is demanding, and were in the process of analyzing it.

Thomas characterized the company's latest offer as "definitely worse and a step backward. This is more evidence the company is not making a true effort to bargain in good faith."

One of the demands, in the name of increasing productivity, would raise the number of jobs to be eliminated at the Gramercy facility through outsourcing and job combinations from 60 to 65.

Another is changing overtime pay from receiving time-and-a-half after eight hours worked in a day to premium pay only after 40 hours in a week. The proposal would allow arbitrary changes in the start time and duration of the workweek.

The company also proposes to gut seniority with its demand that job placement in bidding be based on so-called "readiness skills," a proposal many workers say is one of the most dangerous. As well, each worker would have to requalify annually in order

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Working-class politics and the unions

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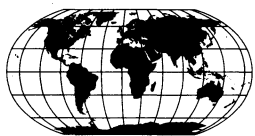
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Russia, Belarus sign accord for closer economic, political ties

Moscow and Minsk agreed in mid-December to facilitate closer economic and political ties. The governments of Russia and Belarus signed a declaration calling for a union treaty to be drawn up by the middle of 1999. The agreement could lead to a common currency; a joint defense, security, and foreign policy; a common budget; and unified civil and tax legislation. There is already a customs union between Moscow and the former Soviet republic of Belarus.

Spokespeople for the capitalist rulers of the United States and other imperialist powers oppose this step. A December 30 editorial in the *New York Times* opined, "If the merger does move ahead, it would burden an already depleted Russian economy with the severe economic problems facing Belarus.... Moscow would make it that much harder to pay off its own back wages and loans and to reestablish credibility with the International Monetary Fund and other financial institutions." The editors fretted that it would also "extend the reach of Russia's armed forces back to Poland's borders." The Polish government is in the process of joining the U.S.-led NATO military alliance, which will bring NATO forces to the border of the former Soviet Union.

Thailand: 1 million laid off

More than 1 million workers in Thailand have been officially laid off since the country's currency collapse in July 1997, according to the *Financial Times* of London. Among the hardest hit have been auto parts workers. Vehicle sales in the first 11 months of 1998 were down 64 percent. Additionally, the minuscule safety net that does exist for unemployed workers is insufficient. One auto parts worker, Kalaya Suwanmalee, said "I feel like I've fallen onto the dark side of life. I have no land in the countryside to save me. No cousins to help me either." Only 2.5 percent of the country's 10 million industrial workers are union members.

Australia law cuts abortion access

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Legislative Assembly passed a law tightening access to abortion November 26. The

Workers in south Korea protest layoffs



Some 3,000 south Korean subway workers rallied in early January to protest expected layoffs. Unemployment there is over 1.5 million people — triple from one year ago.

original bill included a requirement for parental consent for women under 18 and imposed restrictions on which doctors could perform the procedure. The law would have forced the closure of the Reproductive Health Care Services clinic in Canberra. Those provisions were removed after considerable debate. The final bill requires a woman seeking an abortion to read an officially sanctioned information booklet, view pictures of fetuses, and wait three days after reading the booklet before the procedure can be performed.

While abortion is technically illegal in most Australian states and territories under the various criminal codes, substantial access has been won in practice over the last

30 years. Family Planning ACT executive director Sandra Mackenzie called the result "a foot in the door" for opponents of women's right to choose. Right to Life Australia head, Margaret Tighe, described it as "one small step for mankind."

Australia: native title claim loses

In a December 18 judgment delivered in less than a minute, Federal Court judge Howard Olney rejected a native title claim over 2,000 square kilometers of land and water on the Victoria-New South Wales border. Olney said by 1881 the ancestors of the Yorta Yorta people making the claim no longer possessed their tribal lands and no longer lived according to traditional laws. "Notwithstanding the genuine efforts of the members of the claimant group to revive the lost culture of their ancestors, native title rights and interests once lost are not capable of revival," he ruled.

Yorta Yorta spokesperson Monica Morgan said an appeal would be considered. "We've been in this country for thousands and thousands of years. It will take longer than a few seconds from a judge to wipe away who we are," she said.

Cuba: sugar harvest falls short, GDP grew 1.2 percent in 1998

Cuba's economy minister José Luis Rodríguez announced to the National As-

sembly December 21 the country's economy grew 1.2 percent in 1998. This was below the government's originally projected Gross Domestic Product growth target of 2.5-3.5 percent. The lower percentage is due to the record low sugar harvest, which was devastated by Hurricane Georges; low food crops; reduced sugar and nickel export prices; a contraction in foreign credits caused by the worldwide capitalist crisis; and the continuing U.S. economic war against Cuba. Rodríguez said Cuba's economic recovery is still on track, citing growth in the tourist sector, as well as advances in nickel output, oil and gas production, food and consumer goods manufacturing, and fisheries. Cuba Council of State vice president, Carlos Lage, added that had it not been for the low sugar crop, the economy would have grown by 4 percent last year.

Mexico: gov't ends price controls

Under the pretext of "severe budgetary pressure," the Mexican government scrapped its last remaining control on food prices January 1, cutting the nationwide subsidy on tortillas, the country's corn staple. The price of tortillas jumped 33 percent, from 3 pesos to 4 pesos (about 40 cents) per kilogram. The price of gasoline and diesel fuel has already risen. The Mexican trade ministry claimed the elimination of the subsidy would benefit 40,000 tortilla-producing companies supposedly on the brink of bankruptcy due to the price controls.

U.S. gov't suspends deportations to Nicaragua and Honduras

Washington suspended deportations December 30 of immigrants considered "temporary refugees" from Honduras and Nicaragua for 18 months, while those from Guatemala and El Salvador get only a two-month extension. The U.S. government asserted that this unequal treatment was because there was greater damage from Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua. The move affects approximately 150,000 people from those two countries and 500,000 from Guatemala and El Salvador. In order to receive the temporary delay, immigrants facing deportation must report to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, identify themselves, and pay \$175 in fees.

"This is pure discrimination," Arnaldo Ramos, a Salvadoran who is the director of the Council of Latino Agencies, told the *Washington Post*. "Perhaps El Salvador and Guatemala weren't hit as hard by the hurricane, but they were hit very, very hard by U.S. policy in the past." Under new immigration laws, a record high of nearly 300,000 immigrants have been deported from the United States over the last two years, double the number in the previous two-year period.

—MEGAN ARNEY

Doug Cooper in Sydney, Australia, contributed to this column.

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The Militant

Vol. 63/No. 2

Closing news date: January 6, 1999

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Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311.2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:11/pubs/militant Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year sub-

scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. **Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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Clinton plans \$110 billion increase in military spending

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In his weekly radio address January 2, U.S. president William Clinton proposed the largest increase in military spending in 15 years. In the budget he plans to submit to Congress in February, Clinton will propose to hike the Defense Department's \$258 billion budget to almost \$269 billion for 1999, with a \$110 billion increase over the next six years. The additional funds will pay for new weaponry, including F-22 warplanes, new warships, and Comanche attack helicopters.

On December 7 Secretary of Defense William Cohen, Gen. Henry Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the heads of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps met with Clinton to discuss a \$148 billion increase over next six years. Two weeks later Cohen announced a planned 4.4 percent pay hike across the board for the 1.4 million U.S. military personnel.

Coming close to the sum Pentagon tops had requested only brought Clinton more denunciations from the right wing, however. The Democratic president is "personally responsible for the defamation of our defense system," exclaimed Republican Sen. James Inhofe, a member of the committee on combat readiness. "The president's going

to try to make it look like he's a pro-defense president. It's an outrage."

James Webb, who was secretary of the Navy in the Reagan administration, called Clinton's spending hike "a small Band-Aid on a military system that has been hemorrhaging for years," in a column published in the *Wall Street Journal* January 5.

White House officials retorted by pointing to the Clinton administration's record of using U.S. military force around the world, including operations in Yugoslavia and the recent "Operation Desert Fox" that rained hundreds of missiles and bombs on the Iraqi people.

That onslaught in the Arab-Persian Gulf cost more than \$400 million in cruise missiles. Clinton and his top officials have made a habit of referring to the United States as "the world's indispensable nation."

The Clinton administration's war budget proposal is a continuation of the third militarization drive launched by Democrats in the White House since the late 1930s.

The first began with President Franklin Roosevelt's "quarantine the aggressor" speech in 1937 as the U.S. rulers prepared for entry into World War II. The bourgeois class used their war preparations for this slaughter to contain and push back working-class radicalization that flowed from the



U.S. president William Clinton has proposed a \$110 billion increase over the next six years to Washington's military budget, meaning more warships, war planes, and missiles to carry out the interests of U.S. bosses worldwide. Above, U.S. marines prepare to board Sea Knight helicopters during 1990-91 slaughter of Iraqi people.

gigantic labor battles that built the CIO. It ended with the demobilization of millions of U.S. troops following Washington's defeat of Japan in 1945.

Washington's second militarization drive began in 1947 with President Harry Truman's executive order initiating the anticommunist loyalty-oath program and the witch-hunt. That campaign lasted through the Korean War and ended with Washington's defeat in Vietnam.

The third militarization drive was launched in the January 1980 State of the Union address of President James Carter, who announced the decision to reinstate draft registration. Carter's speech triggered

immediate and large-scale protest through the United States. The U.S. government's massive increase in military spending began late in the Carter administration and has continued since then.

U.S. military expands across Europe

Washington's expansion of the NATO military alliance into Eastern Europe, its military operations in the Caspian Sea region, and elsewhere around the planet highlights the Clinton administration's deepening militarization drive. According to the December 14 *Washington Post*, U.S. special operations forces have conducted military maneuvers and training exercises in at least 110 countries, including every country in Latin America.

In a move to tighten its military noose around the Russian workers state, Washington has launched a Joint Contact Team Program run by the U.S. European Command based in Stuttgart, Germany. Under this arrangement 1,400 U.S. military personnel have been brought into the region to train 100,000 soldiers. Another 1,400 military officers from countries in Eastern Europe have traveled to the United States or to U.S. bases in Europe.

The U.S. military has set up operations in 13 countries across Central and Eastern Europe, with plans to expand into the Caucasus region and the southern flank of Russia. Bulgarian soldiers have participated in more than 15 joint exercises with U.S. GIs. And in Lithuania, a team of U.S. military officials went to inspect every active air base and naval facility, companies, and platoons, to assess that country's military capabilities. Last July, Washington organized a joint military exercise involving U.S., Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian troops.

Washington's military moves have gone hand-in-hand with attacks on working people in the United States, including the deportation of almost 300,000 undocumented immigrants in the two years since Clinton signed into law the Illegal Immigration and Reform Responsibility Act.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service is now the largest federal law enforcement agency with a budget of nearly \$1 billion and 15,000 armed cops.

'Euro' is launched amid accelerating imperialist rivalry in Europe, with U.S.

BY CARL-ERIK ISSACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The euro, the common currency of 11 of the 15 member states in the European Union, came into being January 1. The exchange rates of the participating countries' currencies were supposedly irrevocably fixed at the start of the new year.

In the weeks leading up to the launch of the new currency, a common interest rate was set at 3.0 percent in the participating countries.

The common currency is intended to put European capitalists in a stronger position to compete with their rivals in the United States. The "euro zone" covers an area with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) close to that of the United States, with a population of 290 million. The U.S. dollar has been the world's dominant currency since World War I, when it replaced the British pound sterling. The dollar today accounts for 60 percent of global foreign currency reserves, almost four times as much as the European currencies combined.

The birth of the euro opens the possibility that central banks around the world will begin to shift their holdings of the main foreign currencies — with the dollar, euro, and yen competing for their share. This can increase the volatility on the world financial markets.

Japanese prime minister Keizo Obuchi traveled to Europe in early January to seek the backing of the governments of France, Germany, and Italy for the greater use of the yen as an international currency. Meanwhile, the big Japanese life insurers are moving to shift their foreign investments, 70 percent of which are now in dollars, to an even split between the dollar and the euro.

The euro has come into being at a time when the strengthening of U.S. imperialism, relative to its competitors, since the early 1980s has peaked. The spreading deflationary crisis of the capitalist world economy has increased conflicts between Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, and Tokyo.

The European rulers aren't faring so well either at this moment. Labor unit costs in

Europe are higher than in the rest of the capitalist world, with the bosses so far unable to force the kind of "labor flexibility" — that is take-backs — on workers that have been carried out in the United States. The pressure to do this, in the name of lowering unemployment and keeping the euro strong, will grow.

Unemployment rates still average about 11 percent in the euro zone countries, reaching nearly 20 percent in Spain, despite an upturn in the business cycle in most countries in Europe. This unemployment is causing a social crises in Europe with no end in sight.

Contrary to the mantra that the euro will resolve the unemployment crises, the launch of the common currency will tend to increase joblessness, as governments use defending their national currency's exchange rate to the euro

as a pretext for deeper austerity policies. Mergers of companies over the national borders are expected to lead to cutting tens of thousands of jobs.

U.S. jets fire at Iraqi planes

Continued from front page

and several Arab regimes have called for lifting or easing the sanctions. A UN report issued last April stated that nearly 100,000 more Iraqis die each year in hospitals than died before the sanctions were imposed. "It's not surprising" that many people are "increasingly cynical about American claims that the United States has no desire to hurt ordinary Iraqis," opined an article in the January 3 *New York Times*.

Baghdad is pressing to capitalize on Washington's political weaknesses by repeatedly asserting the sovereign right to fly its planes in the "no-fly zones" imposed on its territory. Nearly every day since December 23 Iraqi aircraft have flown into the prohibited areas. The Iraqi military has reportedly moved fighter jets and helicopters into the northern and southern zones and nearly doubled the number of surface-to-air missile batteries there.

"Our resistance will continue against any penetration," declared Iraqi vice president Taha Yassin Ramadan December 29, the day after U.S. warplanes destroyed an anti-aircraft battery in northern Iraq, killing four Iraqi soldiers and injuring at least seven others, according to Baghdad. The Iraqi government said it launched surface to air missiles after the U.S. planes attacked first.

On December 30 U.S. fighter jets again fired missiles into Iraqi territory, claiming Baghdad had fired at a formation of 24 warplanes, including British Tornado bombers and U.S. F-16s. That assault killed a peasant and wounded two others.

Ramadan said the U.S. and British air patrols are spying operations and part of imperialist aggression against Iraq, a point Iraqi officials repeatedly made about the UN "weapons inspectors" who provoked the recent round of confrontations. U.S. officials

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From Pathfinder

New International ■ no. 10

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

Jack Barnes

"There will be new Hitlers, new Mussolinis. That is inevitable. What is not inevitable is that they will triumph. The working-class vanguard will organize our class to fight back against the devastating toll we are made to pay for the capitalist crisis. The future of humanity will be decided in the contest between these contending class forces." \$14.00

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Ventura plays up 'tough' image as he attacks social benefits

BY DOUG JENNESS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Minnesota's new governor, Jesse Ventura, closed his inaugural address here on January 4 with "hooyah," the greeting of the Navy SEALs. His 10-minute speech was peppered with references to his toughening in the Navy's special elite unit, and he read a message from his former instructor. Eight of his SEAL buddies were on hand for the swearing in, including three who stood behind him in dress blues and saluted him at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

The SEALs' presence underscored the "tough guy" image Ventura has been projecting during his election campaign and since his election in November.

A former wrestler who likes to be called "the Body" and a member of the Navy SEALs for four years, Ventura presents himself as physically strong, even violent — a Bonapartist figure who can stand above the partisan conflicts of the Democrats and Republicans.

In the national spotlight since becoming the first Reform Party candidate to be elected for statewide office anywhere in the country, many of the newspaper and TV interviews with him have put a spotlight on his experience in the Navy. A front-page article, "SEALing His Fate," in the January 3 issue of the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* quoted extensively from a chapter by Ventura in a book of reminiscences, *The Teams: An Oral History of the U.S. Navy SEALs*.

One of the items, not only revealing about Ventura but about the arrogance and brutality of the U.S. military forces in other countries, relates to Ventura's experience in the Philippines. He is quoted as saying that just outside the Subic Bay Naval base "was a mile of road that held something like 350 bars and 10,000 girls.... We went out bar-hopping every night."

The same *Pioneer Press* article quoted Ventura bragging, days before his inauguration, about his involvement, together with other U.S. soldiers, in the degrading treatment of Filipina women who were prostitutes. As in all other interviews about his experience in the Navy, Ventura pointedly said he would uphold the SEALs' code of silence about their military missions.

Even before Ventura was sworn in as governor and the Minnesota National Guard's commander in chief, the Guard began to use Ventura's military experience in its recruiting efforts. In a large mailing last month, brochures featuring a snapshot of the governor-elect were sent to high school juniors. Initial reports from Guard officials indicate that recruitment was running more than twice the usual rate.

In an hour-long television interview with C-Span, Ventura presented a wide range of

sometimes conflicting views, as he did during the campaign, aimed at appealing to a broad range of people. He pointed to the "missing in action" bracelet he wears, and then said his first political demonstration was a protest against reinstating the draft, because student deferrals were a way for the wealthy to stay out of war. He described going with his wife to a rally supporting the Equal Rights Amendment for women.

Opposes social benefits

At the same time Ventura has been cultivating his tough-guy image, he has also been pressing the theme that people should cope with economic and social difficulties as individuals or families and not look to the government to organize financing for education, medical assistance, child care, and other social benefits.

In a radio call-in show on Minnesota Public Radio the day after he assumed office, the new governor contended that education, child care, relief for the homeless, and so on are not rights.

The only social right is to go out there and compete, he said. When asked about the state-subsidized MinnesotaCare health insurance program, Ventura said, "Competition pushes prices down — not socializing and monopolizing." When asked what he would do about homelessness, he replied, "We have charities, don't we?" And then added, "There are some people that choose to be homeless."

During a meeting last month at North Hennepin Community College students asked him to explain his views on public financing for college education. According to the *Pioneer Press*, Ventura argued, "I don't want government raising our children. I want parents raising our children." If they don't have enough money, he said, "the government cannot be the answer." Asked about students who are single mothers, he replied, "Why is she a single mother?"

"Because the guy ain't around," a woman called out.

"Then let's get the guy," Ventura said. "What if he is in prison?" the woman replied.

There are exceptions to every rule, Ventura said, but he questioned why a woman would get involved with a man who would go to prison.

In the weeks following his election and leading up to his inauguration, the governor-elect has cultivated the populist image of someone who represents all Minnesotans, regardless of political affiliation and views. He spoke to meetings of farmers, veterans, high school and college students, state government employees, and union officials. His inaugural party January 16 will feature rock singer Jonny Lang and has been dubbed

Stop the execution of Gary Graham!



Militant/Lea Sherman

BY LEA SHERMAN

HOUSTON — Chanting, "Free Gary Graham," family and supporters of Graham marched from Market Square Park to the Harris County Courthouse here January 2. The 35 protesters gathered to demand a stay of execution and a new trial for Graham, who is scheduled to be executed January 11.

Graham, 35, was just 17 when he was prosecuted for capital murder in Harris County, Houston, in 1981. Graham, who is Black, was convicted and sent to death row at Huntsville prison on the basis of only one witness who claims to have seen him at the site of the shooting in the dimly lit parking lot of a grocery store. Six eyewitnesses said he was not the gunman and five other people placed him far from the scene. There is no physical evidence linking him to the murder. Despite this, on

November 18 the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in Austin rejected Graham's appeal for a new trial. Immediately the Harris County District Attorney's office, which has sent the highest number of people to death row in the United States, requested an execution date and two days later a state district judge said that Graham should die January 11.

Graham, who changed his name to Shaka Sankofa in 1995, and his supporters have declared his innocence and fought for a new trial for many years. The rapid scheduling of the execution day surprised many who thought Graham had gotten a permanent stay of execution in 1993. There is another appeal pending in the federal court.

Lea Sherman is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

"The People's Celebration."

When he met with the Minnesota AFL-CIO Executive Committee, Ventura sharply rebuked the 40 officials present for not supporting the Reform Party ticket. The labor officialdom, he said, needs "to start looking beyond the Democratic Party, looking for a bigger vision than just what the Democratic Party has been." He hit a sore point when he stressed that the labor officials had backed a loser. He also commented that he was "not a big supporter of the minimum wage."

Bill Peterson, the AFL-CIO secretary treasurer said that even before Ventura's verbal spanking, some members of the executive council had begun pursuing other political avenues. "It's evident that the way we're going we haven't been very successful," he said. According to the December 16 *Union Advocate*, AFL-CIO President Bernard Brommer said the leadership of the state labor organization is "ready to roll up our sleeves" to help Ventura be a successful governor.

Proposals for tighter ballot restrictions

Important sectors of the ruling class in Minnesota are concerned about the strains on the two-party setup that the Ventura victory signify and are urging more roadblocks to the development of a multiparty situation. For example, a November 22 editorial in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, "Too Many Parties? Raise 'major party' threshold," calls on the state legislature to raise the 5 percent vote threshold for major party status to 10 percent or higher of the vote in the previous election.

"Major party" status allows candidates to receive public campaign funds and to be booked in many more media debates. The editorial complains that not only has the Reform Party crossed this threshold, but in the 1998 election the Taxpayers Party also cleared this hurdle.

Meanwhile, several Republican politicians have announced that they are leaving the GOP and will seek the Reform Party nomination in the next elections.

— YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD —

Iceland: YS opposes cop taping of Iraq bombing protest

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists, an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. Compuserve: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY KÁRI GYLFASSON

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — More than 100 people gathered outside the U.S. embassy here December 18, protesting the military attacks launched by Washington and London against Iraq.

The action was called by the Young Socialists and supported by other organizations, including the Campaign Against Military Bases, Socialist Organization, and Women's Council for Culture and Peace. Flyers, e-mails, and press releases were sent out to build the demonstration. The protesters demanded the bombings be stopped, Iraq's sovereignty be respected, and the "weapons inspectors" get out, as well as the

Icelandic government stop supporting attacks on Iraq. The main radio station, Channel 1, read the press release announcing the demonstration a couple of hours before it took place. When people gathered in front of the embassy, about 20 cops were there with two vans. Two men in civilian clothes began taking photos, and one was videotaping the protest. When asked to identify themselves they refused. One finally answered they were cops.

Speakers at the rally included Sigurdur Haraldsson, a shipyard worker and YS member who is on the national board of the Campaign Against Military Bases, as well as representatives of the Socialist Organization, Humanist Party, and the Campaign Against Military Bases. The Young Socialists had a book table where five issues of the *Militant* and a copy of *The Communist Manifesto* were sold.

During the demonstration police pushed people aside to let a car coming up the street go through. One man who did not understand quickly enough was grabbed and

dragged towards the sidewalk.

Olöf Andra Proppe, a YS member who was chairing the protest, pointed out that it was the cops who were taking the pictures.

On December 23, a delegation from the Young Socialists delivered a letter at the Reykjavik City Police Station demanding that the videotapes of the demonstration five days earlier be delivered to them to be destroyed. YS spokesman Haraldsson was quoted on Radio and TV news saying the police had no reason to film the protest except to register who was there, and therefore it was a violation of the right to express political views.

Deputy police chief Geir Jon Thorisson said to the TV Channel 2 reporter it is standard practice to film public events. Over the last two years the police force in Iceland has been reorganizing under June 1996 legislation on the "duties and practice" that gives them more space to operate. One measure the police and some politicians have been advocating is placing surveillance cameras in public places. A few months ago, such

cameras were installed in downtown Reykjavik. The newspaper *Morgunblaðið* of December 24 quoted deputy police chief Thorisson saying the police had to be "fully prepared in case of threatening incidents against the embassy," but the protest "turned out to be quite peaceful and therefore there will be no further research of films or other material." In the *Dagur* newspaper the same day, Thorisson said the state prosecutor or ministry of justice must decide whether the tapes will be destroyed.

The Icelandic government is trying to curtail democratic rights at the same time it attacks the right to free education and health care, drives down the living standards in Iceland, and takes imperialistic measures to safeguard the interests of the Icelandic ruling class, such as fishing more out of the neighboring countries' fish stocks and supporting the criminal attack on Iraq. The Young Socialists in Iceland will keep fighting this attack on democratic rights and at the same time draw in other fighters and organizations that are willing to do the same.

Pathfinder printshop tour highlights advances, need to complete capital fund

BY NAOMICRAINE

NEW YORK — Participants in the January 1-3 meeting of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee here got a first-hand look at the revolution under way in the Pathfinder Press printshop. The Saturday evening session of the meeting was a tour organized by the shop staff.

Workers in the shop demonstrated how the printshop is using computer-to-plate technology to cut labor time, in the process transforming their methods of working together to produce the books and pamphlets vital to the political work of the communist movement and other vanguard workers and farmers. The next day the National Committee members, trade unionists, SWP branch organizers, and Young Socialists leaders attending the meeting discussed the next steps in leading this transformation.

At the top of the priorities is raising the funds necessary to finish paying for the newly installed Agfa Galileo computer-to-plate system and other printshop needs. Nearly \$600,000 has been raised since July as part of this capital fund; another \$240,000 is needed over the next two months.

The most striking aspect of the tour was not the machinery, but the increasing confidence of the socialist cadre who work in the shop. These workers are taking more control and responsibility for efficient production and higher quality — from the bindery where the books are finished; to the press operators who are expanding cross-training to be able to run all three presses and produce the plates for them; to the commercial sales effort that financially sustains the shop, which an expanding cross-section of the staff is taking responsibility for (see accompanying photos).

A little more than a month after the Galileo was delivered, and just a few days after Agfa technicians had it fully installed, shop staff members have been able to get the platesetter up and running and make some big steps forward in productivity. In the first three days of full production on the machine — which takes books and other printing projects on computer files and produces press-ready plates within minutes — printshop workers were producing 90 percent of their plates on the Galileo. This included the first pamphlet produced by Pathfinder volunteers as a digitized CD-ROM and printed using the Galileo — *Panama: The Truth About the U.S. Invasion*.

To give an idea of the time savings, shop staff members pointed out that the plates for the last issue of the *Militant* were coming out of the Galileo less than an hour after the editors turned over a print-ready file to the shop. Until fairly recently, stripping and plating the *Militant* took the better part of two days.

One of the workers on night shift, Lisa Rottach, was able to set up the machine to produce 20 plates, press a button, and move on to other tasks in the bindery while the Galileo produced plates. Burning those plates would have taken her a couple hours with the shop's recently installed computer-to-film technology used from August 1998 until last week, and roughly a full shift under the previous hand-stripping methods.

This makes it possible to release more socialist workers to carry out political work in the trade unions and in party branches across the country. Until six months ago, the shop staff size was 47. The steps taken so far have allowed this to be reduced first to 36 in July. With further reductions beginning this month, the staff size will be 32 by the time the SWP convention opens in San Francisco at the beginning of April.

The success in getting the Galileo into the shop and up and running is the result of a couple of other advances: the progress made by more than 100 volunteers around the world who are converting all of Pathfinder's books into fully digital files on CD-ROM, and the big response by supporters of Pathfinder to make contributions to a capital fund to pay for the new equipment.

Developments in politics in the United States and around the world over the past couple of years form the basis of the energetic response. Working-class resistance is deepening. And as



Left: Ryan Lewis, a member of the Young Socialists who heads up crews on the printshop's web press, describes cross-training of press operators. The chart behind him shows steps toward qualifying operators to run all three shop presses — two sheet-fed presses used to produce Pathfinder books, and the web press the *Militant* is printed on — as well as perform the digital preparations and platemaking on the new Galileo computer-to-plate system. The aim is to reduce the shop staff to 32, while improving production rates and quality.

Below: Lisa Rottach (at right) demonstrates Galileo platesetter, which eliminates time-consuming, labor-intensive prepress work. Plates for reprinting the text of the Pathfinder book *John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s* are coming off the platesetter here.



Militant photos by Hilda Cuzco

unionists, youth, and the oppressed resist and seek to understand what they are involved in, the openness to the revolutionary ideas contained in Pathfinder books increases.

Following the tour of the printshop, participants in the National Committee meeting took part in a dinner and party celebrating 40 years of the Cuban revolution and the advances in Pathfinder press and its printshop. The event was sponsored by the New York and Newark branches of the Socialist Workers Party, and the meal was prepared and served by supporters of the party in the area.

Jack Willey, a union meatpacker from Chicago and a member of the Capital Fund Committee that is organizing the fund-raising to purchase the Galileo, spoke briefly about the importance of the books Pathfinder keeps in print for workers involved in struggles such as the recent 98-day strike at Freeman United Coal in central Illinois.

Maggie Trowe, another member of the Capital Fund Committee, reported on the fund's progress. "The \$550,000 fund, launched in October," Trowe said, "comes on top of the fund launched in July at the Active Workers Conference in Pittsburgh. The first fund, which made possible the purchase of the precursor to the Galileo — a computer-to-film imagesetter — and major repairs of the Pathfinder Building, was really not a separate fund. It got us on the track to do what the next fund posed — to purchase the Galileo and meet other capital needs of the shop."

"If we look at it this way, we have an \$840,000 fund, and we have already raised \$592,000 from well over 100 supporters. That is quite an accomplishment, and we can celebrate it tonight,"

Trowe said. "We need to raise \$45,000 to finish paying for the Galileo, and then another \$200,000 over the next two months."

Trowe explained, "We have a Capital Fund Committee, but there are no capitalists on it. Its seven members are all workers who collaborate with socialists throughout the U.S. and in other countries to have discussions with supporters on the political openings and the need to keep Pathfinder books in print. Out of this political process, those who can make contributions of \$1,000 or more do so. It's led by workers who, when they get a windfall, are enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to the fund. Contributors give to the capital fund for the same reason volunteers in the digitizing campaign put in many hours of work scanning, proof-reading, and formatting each week to get the books ready for press."

Trowe explained that since October there have been more than 25 meetings with supporters in 7 countries, resulting in contributions ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Sev-

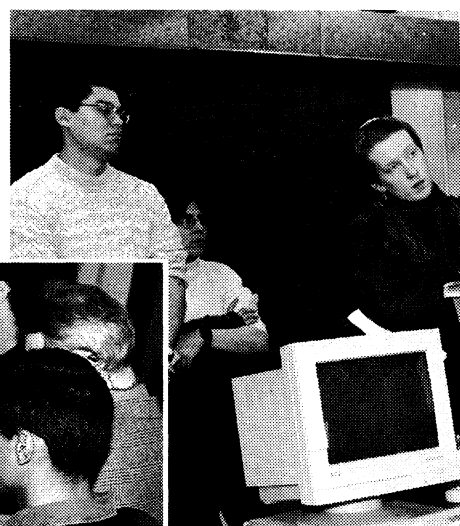
eral contributions that came in during the recent U.S. bombing of Iraq were accompanied by notes from the contributors expressing their satisfaction at being able to strike a blow against the imperialist attack by supporting the effort to get out Pathfinder books. "The response we have gotten so far gives us confidence that we can complete Capital Fund in full and on time," Trowe said. "That is really something to celebrate."

To find out how you can make a capital contribution, write to the Capital Fund Committee, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



Militant photos by Hilda Cuzco

Top right: Mary-Nell Bockman describes how workers in the bindery and press departments have taken initiative in commercial sales campaign to help finance production of revolutionary literature. Bottom: Doug Nelson and Abby Tilsner explain how the bindery is the heart of the shop, where volunteers first learn the habits of discipline, working collectively, and taking more control over production and quality. Above: *Militant* staff member Megan Arney shows digital photo archive where all new photos coming in and all those scanned for Pathfinder books are now stored. As part of tour, members of the Pathfinder staff showed how they are getting digital books prepared by volunteers for reprinting at higher standards than had been possible.



Catfish workers fight for dignity

BY SUSAN LAMONT
ANDRONALD MARTIN

BELZONI, Mississippi — Since mid-November, nearly 70 workers at the Freshwater Farms catfish processing plant here have been waging a determined struggle for workers' rights and dignity on the job. All are Black; most are women.

They began their action the morning of November 16 by standing outside the plant to protest the company's refusal to treat their demands seriously, said Joann Hogan. Although no one had punched in, the company responded by firing them that morning. Hogan, 36, who has worked at Freshwater Farms for seven years, is one of the workers' spokespersons. She actually went into work November 16, but was also fired when she went out to speak with protesters at lunchtime. She and other workers are staffing an informational picket line across the highway from the plant and recently explained the issues in their fight to a team of *Militant* reporters visiting the Delta.

'Stand and be brave'

One of their protest signs summarizes what the struggle is all about: "We'd rather stand out and be brave than to go in and be slaves."

A major concern is the company's refusal to allow adequate time for workers to use the bathroom. Their workstations are between 400 and 500 feet from the restrooms. Only seven minutes are allowed for bathroom breaks, three times a day. "By the time you get your gear off and get to the wash room, the seven minutes is practically gone," Hogan said. "Then you have to get sanitized and redressed up before you can go back to your work station." If they take longer than seven minutes, workers must clock out or they will be written up.

There is no set shift length, either. The shift starts at 8:00 a.m. and workers must stay until the work is finished, whether it's eight, nine, or ten hours a day — or longer. Between 100,000 and 120,000 pounds of catfish are processed each workday. The company also wants workers to stand motionless — and silent — at their workstations, not moving or talking to fellow workers. They expect workers to buy their own sup-

plies, such as gloves, aprons, and hairnets. If you get a hole in your gloves, you have to work with ice-cold water on your hands, unless you can replace the gloves yourself. Workers also face abusive and unfair treatment by supervisors.

The area outside the plant that was designated for smoking was filthy and crawling with maggots. Workers start at \$5.20 an hour, five cents above minimum wage. There is a minimal "incentive" plan: workers who have been at Freshwater for 15 years make as little as \$6.45 an hour. There are no medical benefits. There are no white workers on the production line. The company fired a woman worker who was white, after they found out she was married to a Black man, Hogan said.

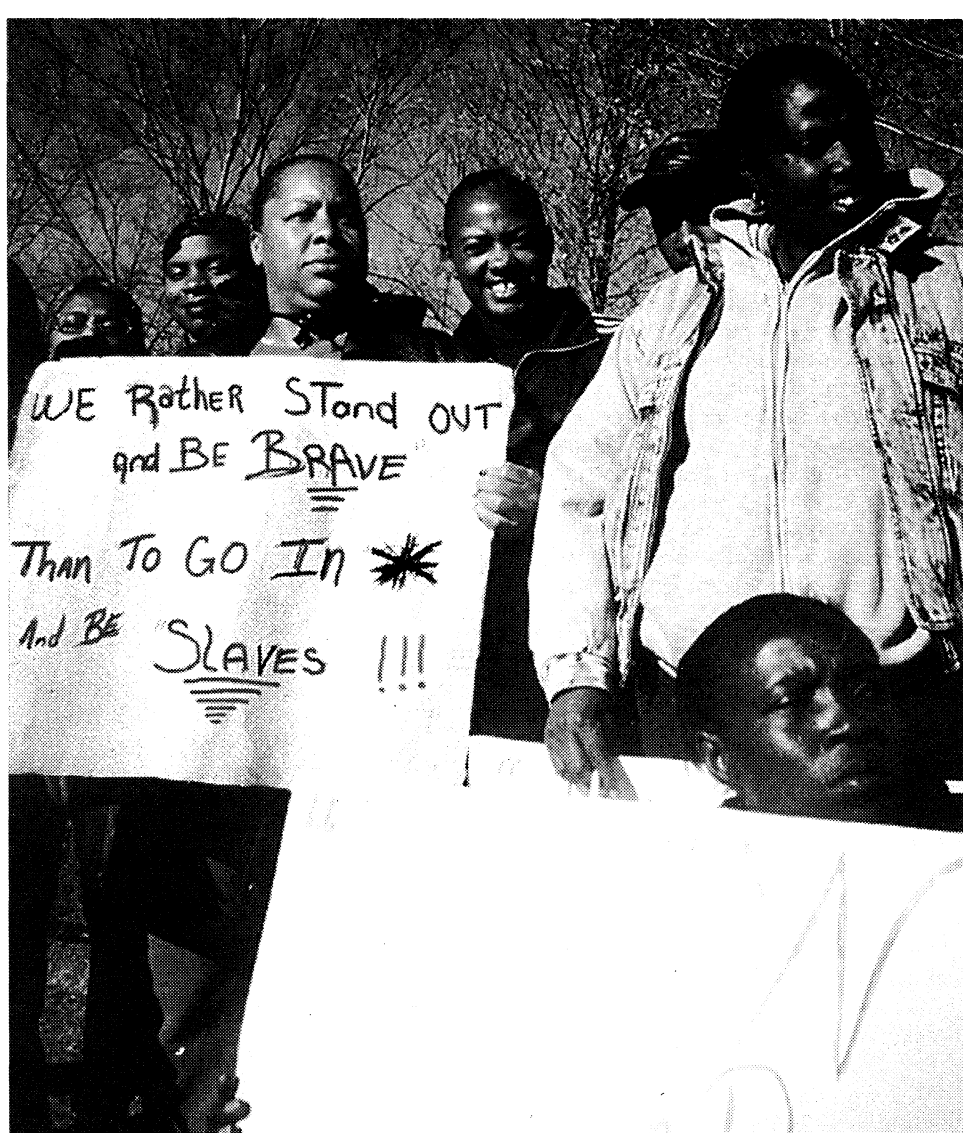
There was a one-day work stoppage in May over the same issues. Despite company assurances that changes would be made, nothing happened.

The company has said that the 68 workers who protested are fired, claiming they violated the "no strike-no lockout" provisions of the union contract. The workers, who have not yet received discharge papers, consider themselves locked-out. They have been unable to collect unemployment, however, or sign up for food stamps, and some have been effectively blacklisted from other jobs in the area.

The company has called Humphreys County sheriff John Allen Jones on picketers several times. Jones is being investigated by the U.S. Justice Department over the death and mistreatment of Black jail inmates. They have also had dead deer and a deer head thrown by their protest area.

The workers are calling for a boycott of Freshwater Farms products, which are sold to restaurants and supermarkets. They have begun informational leafletting at area supermarkets. The plant is organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1529. Hogan was one of the shop stewards; another shop steward was also among those who joined the protest.

Despite the fact that local union officials are not backing their fight, the workers view their struggle as benefiting the workers who are still inside. "If we can make things better, we'll make it better for them as well," Hogan said. There were a total of about 240 workers



Militant/Susan LaMont

Freshwater Farms catfish processing workers in Belzoni, Mississippi, picket outside the plant. They are struggling for better working conditions, safety, and better wages.

in the plant when the protest began.

'The new plantation'

The workers who walked out have contacted area ministers and the Mississippi Delta chapter of Southern Christian Leadership Conference for support. They have formed a new organization, the Catfish Workers of America. An informational leaflet they put out says, in part, "The catfish industry, the new plantation in America, makes millions of dollars of profit off the labor of African-American catfish workers who are paid low wages and given little in benefits. These workers are forced to work under deplorable and dehumanizing conditions where racism is rampant. In the Mississippi Delta, America's poorest region, there are no African-American catfish processors, managers

and few, if any catfish farmers. The only African-American catfish processor was driven out of business several years ago."

Mississippi is the leading producer of farm-raised catfish in the United States, a \$45 million industry for the state. The first catfish workers to win union recognition were at Delta Pride's plants in Indianola, about 25 miles from Belzoni. They began pressing for union recognition in 1986 and finally won in 1990. Workers at Delta Pride are in the same UFCW local as Freshwater Farms workers.

For more information about the Freshwater workers' fight or to send a donation, contact Catfish Workers Fund, c/o the Myers Foundation, P.O. Box 29, Belzoni, MS 39038 or call (601) 247-2694 or (601) 247-1471 or e-mail at www.commonground.com

Co-op aids Black farmers in Mississippi's Delta

BY SUSAN LAMONT
ANDRONALD MARTIN

MILESTON, Mississippi — David Howard, 40, is president of the Mileston Co-op, an enthusiastic activist for the rights of Black farmers. He and his cousin, R.C. Howard, recently welcomed *Militant* reporters at the co-op's new office, a few miles down the road from Tchula (see article on facing page).

The Mileston Co-op, they explained, is the oldest Black farm cooperative in the United States. It was formed in 1942 and chartered in 1944; the Howards' grandfather was one of the founders. The purpose of the cooperative is to help small farmers get a better deal on seed, chemicals, and other products by buying in quantity. During the 1970s and '80s, the cooperative also helped members participate in a government program to supply farmers with cattle. With the price of cattle and hogs so low, most co-op members have since decided to stick with cotton and soybeans, David explained.

Only Black-owned cotton gin

For many years, the co-op also operated the only Black-owned cotton gin in the United States. It burned down in 1986.

"There was no insurance and it would have cost \$1 million to rebuild," David said. "By that time, the machinery was also outmoded. We had tried to keep it going by buying used equipment, but it was going downhill."

"Other farmers used to use the gin too," he continued. When it burned down, it was difficult for Black cotton farmers to get their cotton ginned nearby. To use the white-owned gins, you had to be a stockholder — a measure instituted to keep the Black farmers out.

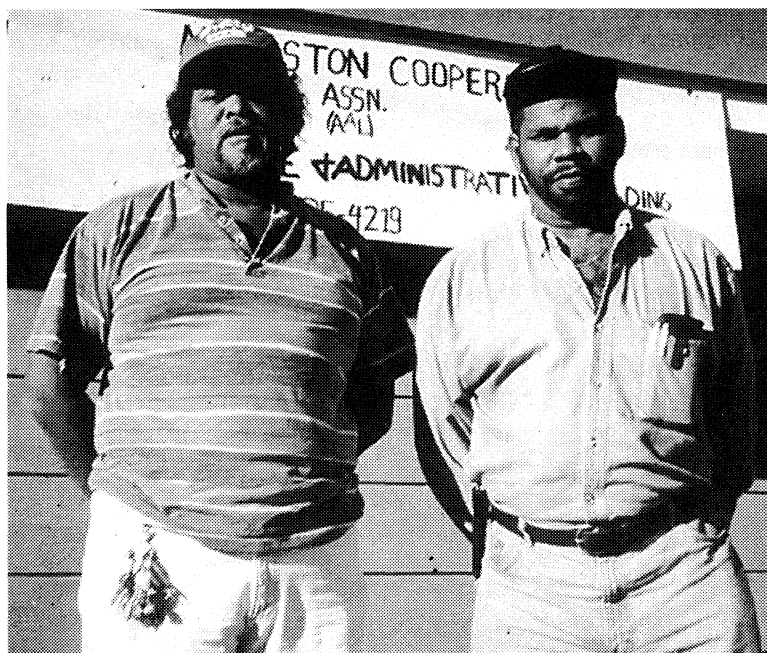
"So Black farmers had to take their cot-

ton 50 and 60 miles away, to other gins that weren't restricted to stockholders," David said. "Still, they wouldn't gin your cotton until they had finished with their own members." He once lost more than 50 bales of cotton because the gin he went to wouldn't process it. (A bale weighs between 400 and 500 pounds.)

The Mileston Co-op now has 15 members. They are trying to help members with marketing and also looking into programs that could help provide jobs in the area, such as canning vegetables.

David and R.C. Howard have been farming their whole lives, just like their fathers and grandfather before them. Like many farmers in the Delta, they plant cotton and soybeans. The two grew up with the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

"Our fathers used to put up civil rights workers at their farmhouses," David recalled. "And my grandfather, who had a couple of small houses, let one be used for a school they set up." The Howards have long worked with the Southern Christian Leadership Con-



Militant/Susan LaMont

R.C. (left) and David Howard, from the Mileston Cooperative near Tchula, Mississippi. David is the president of the co-op.

ference (SCLC) in the Delta.

David has two other jobs besides working his 200-acre farm. He drives a school bus every day and also works full-time as a mechanic at an auto parts plant in Greenwood. "About half the cooperative members work at outside jobs," David said.

Drought in 1998

The last year has been hard for Delta farmers, as for many others around the country, because of a serious drought. Many, including David Howard, put thousands of dollars into their farms and got little or nothing back.

Disaster relief is another way that Black

farmers have been discriminated against by the government. The amount of disaster relief a farmer gets is based on estimated yields. A yield is the production per acre. It is measured differently for each commodity. For example, soybeans are measured in bushels per acre; or if your cotton averages three bales per acre, your yield would be 1500. The processor at the gin or mill certifies a farmer's yield. Although David had planted, he was given "zero yield" and therefore no relief. No white farmers in the area were put in that category.

Both David and R.C. had mixed reactions to the proposed settlement to the Black farmers' lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). "Some it will do some good, others it won't," said R.C., 44, who farms full-time. "\$50,000 isn't much money compared to what some farmers have lost; others it will help."

"Part of the settlement should be to do something with the folks who have been doing the discriminating," added David.

"The farmers are the backbone of the country," R.C. stressed. "When it takes \$350-\$375 an acre to plant cotton, you need to be guaranteed at least \$400 an acre in return, not \$280. A man in a suit and tie, who has never been working out in the hot sun, sits in an office somewhere and sets these prices. He'll set 55-56 cents a pound for cotton, when we need 80-85 cents a pound just to survive." Farmers also have to pay exorbitant amounts for pesticides to kill worms and other pests that damage crops and reduce yields, including \$24 an acre to the USDA to spray for boll weevil, an insect that destroys cotton.

The Mileston Co-op has three new, small buildings, including a convenience store they are hoping to build up.

Mississippi: Black farmers fight for change

Eddie Carthan, former mayor of Tchula, describes struggle in Mississippi Delta

BY SUSAN LAMONT
AND RONALD MARTIN

TCHULA, Mississippi — The northeastern part of this state — some 7,000 square miles of flat, fertile farm land formed by the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers' flood plain — is known as the Delta.

The Delta's population is overwhelmingly Black. The area is known for its poverty in the U.S. state that ranks last in per capita personal income. And it is known for the degree to which old attitudes and practices from the South's segregationist past still have a hold. But it is also home to fighting Black farmers and workers who are determined to see some changes made, including farmers who are part of the historic fight against the discriminatory practices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Eddie Carthan, 49, runs an old-fashioned hardware store in this small Delta town. A longtime civil rights leader in the area, he is also president of the Mississippi Family Farmers and an activist in a class-action suit by Black farmers against the USDA.

After his father's death in 1983, Carthan began farming his family's land, raising cotton, soybeans, and wheat on 600 acres near Tchula. He was pushed out of farming in 1997 by the cost-price squeeze that all small farmers face, exacerbated by the government's discriminatory lending policies toward farmers who are Black. Now he rents out his land to other farmers.

"The Mississippi Family Farmers, which is a statewide organization formed in 1985, predates the current USDA suit," Carthan explained in a recent interview with these *Militant* correspondents held in his busy hardware store. "So many Black farmers had problems with government and local lending institutions. The white plantation owners, banks, and FmHA [Farmers Home Administration] were trying to get rid of Black farmers, so we came together to save Black farmers and to encourage young people and women to get into the business." The FmHA, now part of the USDA's Farm Service Agency, was set up in the 1930s under mass pressure, to provide loans to working farmers on better terms than the commercial banks.

"In the 1980s and early '90s, we held meetings and forums and workshops, trying to help farmers get the help they needed from the government. When no help was forthcoming, we tried to file an antidiscrimination suit ourselves in the early '90s against the USDA. But we had trouble getting lawyers and the money to file," Carthan noted. Finally, they decided to join with other Black farmers from Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia, and other states in the current lawsuit, which includes some 125 farmers from Mississippi.

Farmers discuss proposed settlement

Black farmers here are discussing the recent settlement proposal from the U.S. Department of Justice, which represents the USDA in the federal court suit. In late November, hundreds of Black farmers attended three meetings in Selma, Alabama; Pine Bluff, Arkansas; and Durham, North Carolina, to hear the Justice Department's proposed settlement of their \$2.5 billion class-action antidiscrimination suit, filed in 1997. Under terms of the proposal, farmers would be divided into two classes. Class A, which would include between 2,000 and 4,000 farmers, would be required to provide relatively little documentation to prove discrimination. They would receive \$50,000 each, and their loan debts to the government would be written off. They would also get tax relief on the \$50,000 and the debt relief.

Other farmers — a much smaller number, according to the farmers' lawyers — would be in class B. If they have extensive documentation, they could ask for an arbitration hearing, where they could get a much larger settlement — or a much smaller one, or none at all. A farmer who was not awarded just compensation by such a hearing would not be able to appeal the decision.

"This settlement will solve some problems," Carthan said, "but it's not near justice or fair, nowhere close."

Some Black farmers in Mississippi are living on land that has been in their family for generations, since after the Civil War. "A lot of Black farmers have lost their land through trickery and thievery," Carthan said. "Those who remain have caught hell, trying to survive. Now the government has admitted it has discriminated against Blacks, but they're refusing to adequately pay for their illegal, discriminatory practices." The proposed settlement does not include punitive damages for pain and suffering over the years, repayment for loss of property, and other losses suffered by Black farmers, he noted.

Part of the proposed settlement would include a federally appointed monitor to make sure discriminatory practices didn't continue at the USDA. Carthan expressed concern that the lawsuit settlement doesn't adequately address the structural problems with the USDA that would remain if the case is settled, to really end the discriminatory practices.

"Every county has a supervisor hired by the federal government, who then sets up a local board to oversee farm loans and other farm programs," Carthan explained. "Some of these boards are elected, others appointed." The virtually all-white boards in Mississippi and elsewhere in the South are the ones who have been denying or delaying loans and refusing to treat Black farmers' complaints seriously for decades. "It would be hard for a Black to even be allowed to serve on one," Carthan said.

'A very corrupt system'

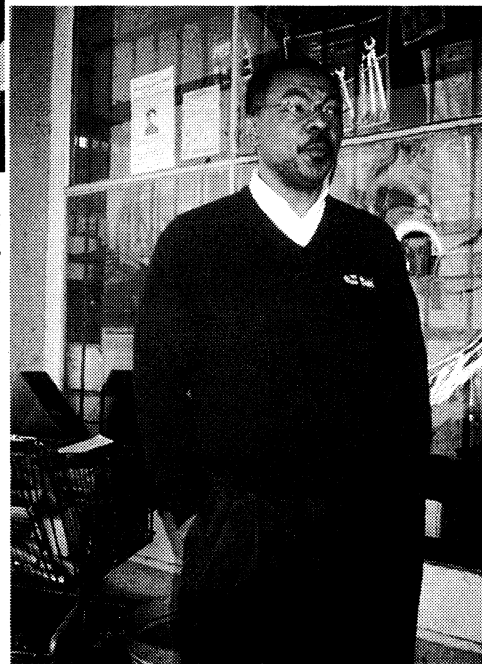
After Carthan started farming in 1983, it took him three years to get a government loan, after being turned down several times each year he tried. Carthan lost some of his farm equipment during that time, along with \$40,000 he had raised as a mortgage.

"It is a very corrupt system," Carthan said. "You go through all this trouble, and if you do finally get a loan, it's too late. After all, farming is a timing operation."

"If you did get to plant [cotton], come harvest time, the cotton gin in this area are all owned by white cooperatives, and they wouldn't gin our cotton," he added. "So we had to take it 30 or 40 miles away, where they charged more. The gins make money from the oil and seed they remove from the cotton, but still they would charge the Black farmers." The system is rigged in other ways, he noted. Any USDA program to supplement farmers' income is based on yield, which the gin certifies to the government. White farmers are always certified with high yields, the Black farmers with low ones. "The same official who works for the local USDA board has a relative who works in the local bank," Carthan described. "These are the same people who are trying to get your land, through delaying your loans, selling you bad seed, and in other ways." Carthan's father was sold bad cotton seed one year, but



Militant photos: top, Linda Joyce; right, Susan LaMont
Above, 200 people at the NAACP convention in Atlanta protest racist discrimination against Black farmers July 15. Right, Eddie Carthan, president of Mississippi Family Farmers, in front of his hardware store in Tchula, December 1998.



fought experience to bear in the Black farmers' current struggle. In 1977, Carthan was elected mayor of Tchula, the first Black ever to be elected mayor of a biracial town in the Delta. He was forced out of office in 1981, just one month shy of completing his first term, after being convicted on trumped-up charges of assaulting a police officer. He was given a three-year prison sentence. After seven months, the governor suspended the rest of his sentence.

When Carthan took office, he recalled, Tchula was still segregated, with whites living on one side of the railroad tracks, and Blacks — who were 85 percent of the population — on the other. In the Black community, roads were unpaved, there were no sidewalks or streetlights, 80 percent of the houses had no indoor plumbing, other social services were poor or missing entirely. There were no Blacks heading up any city department, and many Blacks "did not know where the City Hall was," Carthan recalled.

Carthan sought to bring in improved housing, medical care, as well as water and sewage programs to the Black community. In an effort to punish him and put the Black community back in its place, the local white business and landowning establishment began "investigating" him from the moment he took office. "It was a legal lynching and a political lynching," Carthan said.

Before he was even released from prison on the assault charges, Carthan was again framed up — this time on charges that he had murdered a city alderman a year earlier, in 1980. He was finally acquitted of the murder charge, after his case became known nationally and internationally, including through the pages of the *Militant*, which campaigned for his release.

While in jail facing the murder charges, he was framed up again, this time on charges of giving false information to a local bank. Sentenced in 1982 to three years in federal prison, he was released by judge's order after eight months.

A victim of frame-up himself, Carthan has lent his support to other fighters under attack. He was a prominent supporter of Mark Curtis, the union activist and Socialist Workers Party member from Des Moines, Iowa, who was framed up on rape and burglary charges and imprisoned from 1988 to 1996. Carthan lent his support to the international defense campaign that finally won Curtis' release.

Susan LaMont is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2122 in Fairfield, Alabama. Ronald Martin is a member of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local 108 in Birmingham.

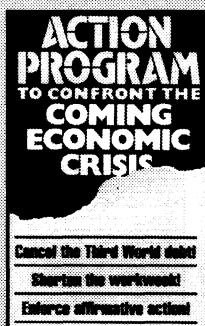
the crop year was over by the time he discovered it. "They try to break your spirit by going after you in all kinds of ways," Carthan said. He recalled one county USDA supervisor who essentially stole money from Black farmers, taking advantage of the fact that some of them could not read. After it was discovered, "He was not fired," Carthan said, "just moved to another office."

In the Delta, much of the land is owned by white plantation owners. "These are white farmers who own large tracts of land, with laborers living and working on his land. He owns the land and the houses. It's like agribusiness. There aren't many small farmers who are white," he said. To get around government ceilings on subsidies a farmer can get, some of these plantation owners divide up their land, putting sections of it in their workers' names — and then collect the additional subsidies themselves.

Tchula's first Black mayor

Carthan brings several decades of hard-

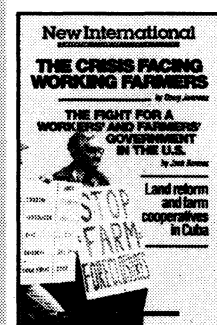
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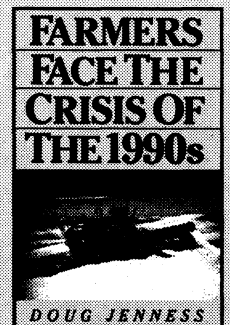
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'The democratic victory of the people must be complete'

At 2:00 a.m. on Jan. 1, 1959, Fulgencio Batista, the U.S.-backed dictator of Cuba, fled the country in face of the advancing forces of the Rebel Army. Speaking over Radio Rebelde from the outskirts of the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, Rebel commander-in-chief Fidel Castro denounced Batista's attempt to turn power over to a military junta, and called for a nationwide general strike. Cuban workers responded to this revolutionary appeal with a massive uprising. By the time the main Rebel Army columns arrived in Havana January 8, the revolution had triumphed, opening the door to Cuba's independence from U.S. imperialism and the road to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of this victory, the *Militant* will publish speeches and other materials throughout the year documenting the revolutionary acts of Cuba's workers and farmers in power. We begin here with Castro's radio announcement to the people of Cuba on Jan. 1, 1959. This translation was published in the March 18, 1973, issue of the Cuban weekly *Granma Weekly Review*. Footnotes and minor corrections to the translation are by the *Militant*.



BY FIDEL CASTRO

Instructions to all Majors of the Rebel Army and to the people.

Regardless of the news coming from the capital, our troops are not to cease fire, no matter what. Our forces are to continue their operations against the enemy on every battlefield. A truce will be accepted only in the case of those garrisons that want to surrender.

It appears that a coup d'état has taken place in the capital.¹ The events in connection with the coup are not known to the Rebel Army. The people are to remain on the alert and obey only the instructions issued by

the General Command.

The dictatorship has crumbled as a result of the crushing defeats dealt it in the last few weeks, but this doesn't mean that the Revolution has already triumphed.

Military operations are to continue without any change as long as no direct order is given by the General Command to act otherwise. That order will be issued only after the military elements that have rebelled in the capital place themselves unconditionally at the disposal of the revolutionary leadership. Revolution, yes; military coup, no!

A military coup behind the backs of the people and the Revolution, no! because it would only serve to prolong the war.

A military coup to help Batista and the big criminals escape, no! because it would only serve to prolong the war.

A military coup in cahoots with Batista, no! because it would only serve to prolong the war.

Robbing the people of their victory, no! because it would only serve to prolong the war until the people scored a total victory.

After seven years of struggle, the democratic victory of the people must be complete — so that there will never be another March 10 in our homeland.²



Above: Bohemia; Left: Institute of Cuban History
Above, workers crowd outside offices of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista's party in Havana on Jan. 1, 1959. Left, Fidel Castro speaks on radio outside the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, calling for general strike to counter a military coup.

the courage of our fighters, as we have taken other cities. An attempt is being made to forbid those who liberated our homeland to enter Santiago de Cuba.

The story of 1895 will not be repeated! This time, the *mambises* will enter Santiago de Cuba!⁴

Santiago de Cuba, you will be free because you deserve it more than any other city and because it is an insult to see the defenders of the tyranny still walking your streets.

Santiago de Cuba, we count on your support!

The city is to be completely paralyzed as of 3:00 p.m. today. Everybody must stop working, in solidarity with the fighters who are to liberate the city. Only the power plant should continue in operation, so the people may receive instructions over the radio.

Santiago de Cuba, we repeat: you will be free because you have earned it and because it isn't right for the soldiers of the tyranny to go on tramping your streets in boots so often drenched with revolutionary blood.

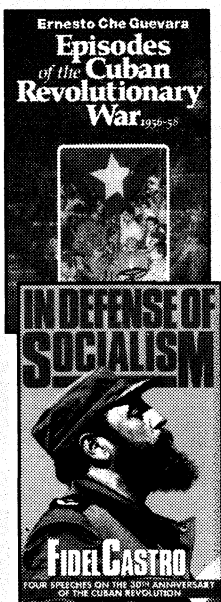
¹ As he fled the island Batista handed power over to Gen. Eulogio Cantillo.

² On March 10, 1952, Batista, a retired general, carried out a coup d'état against the government of Carlos Prío. With Washington's support, Batista established a military dictatorship, canceling scheduled elections and suspending the 1940 constitution. Following the coup, Castro began organizing a revolutionary movement to overthrow the Batista tyranny.

³ Cuban working people responded to this call for a general strike with an uprising that paralyzed the country. The army garrison in Santiago de Cuba surrendered in the afternoon of January 1, and Castro's forces began their week-long march across the country to Havana. Rebel Army columns headed by Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto Che Guevara took control of the main army bases of the dictatorship in Havana on January 2. Fidel Castro was appointed prime minister on Feb. 16, 1959. A detailed account of these events is included in Fidel Castro's speech of Jan. 1, 1989, contained in *In Defense of Socialism: Four Speeches on the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution*, pp. 39–58.

⁴ *Mambi* was the name given to fighters against Spanish colonial rule in Cuba's wars of independence of 1868–78 and 1895–98, many of whom were Black agricultural workers and former slaves. In 1898, as Cuban independence forces were on the verge of victory over the Spanish colonial army the U.S. government declared war on Spain and invaded Cuba. After occupying Santiago de Cuba, on the eastern end of the island, the U.S. military refused to allow Cuban troops into the city. Washington's military occupation of Cuba lasted until 1901, when the Platt Amendment, codifying U.S. domination, was imposed.

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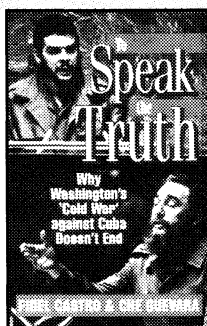
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Cubans honor Tania and others who fought with Che Guevara

BY HILDA CUZCO

Cubans celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Santa Clara, one of the final decisive battles of the Cuban revolutionary war, with a December 30 rally and military ceremony honoring Haydée Tamara Bunke, known by her nom de guerre Tania, and nine other combatants who fought with Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1967.

Raúl Castro, minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) of Cuba, presided over the ceremony. Accompanying Raúl Castro was Commander of the Revolution Ramiro Valdés, who also participated in the interment of the combatants in the same mausoleum where Che Guevara and six other were interred Oct. 17, 1997.

Brig. Gen. Delsa Teté Puebla, the only woman general in the FAR, led the troops in the military ceremony, who were reviewed by Brig. Gen. Enrique Acevedo.

Guevara, an Argentine-born revolutionary who became a central leader of the Rebel Army in the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba, led a unit of Bolivian, Peruvian, and Cuban combatants in Bolivia in 1966-67.

Their effort was aimed at toppling the military regime there and forging an international movement capable of accomplishing in countries throughout Latin America what working people in Cuba had proven was possible by taking power. Che was wounded in combat and captured on Oct. 8, 1967, and the Bolivian military, after seeking agreement from their mentors in Washington, murdered him the next day.

At the 1997 ceremony for Guevara and his comrades, Cuban president Fidel Castro had described the internationalists who fought in Bolivia "as reinforcements, as a detachment of invincible fighters, who this time include not only Cubans but Latin

Americans coming to fight alongside us and write new pages of history and glory."

The remains of Tania and the others, recently recovered in Bolivia, were flown Santa Clara from Havana December 29 and taken to the José Martí library in a military procession.

The participation of women in the ceremony in Santa Clara, and other events paying tribute to the one woman combatant in the Bolivian campaign, was particularly notable. The Cuban daily *Granma* reported that 80 women, as well as members of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution and children in the Pioneers, headed the procession. They were joined by combatants from the column led by Guevara in the Cuban revolutionary war, which won the surrender of Batista's forces in Santa Clara on Dec. 30, 1958.

Nadia Bunke, Tania's mother; Aleida March, the widow of Che Guevara, and her children; and survivors of the Bolivian campaign Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas (Pombo) and Col. Leonardo Tamayo (Urbano) attended. The Cuban press described a seemingly endless line of men and women of all ages who then came to the library to pay homage to the fallen combatants until past one in the morning. The first to pass were 2,000 members of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC).

At the December 30 rally Commander Valdés pointed in his speech to Tania's courageous life in the revolutionary movement. Born in Argentina in 1937 to German parents who had fled the fascist regime, Bunke was one of the many young people drawn to the example of the Cuban revolution. In Bolivia Tania served as part of the underground support for the *guerrilla* led by Che, until her cover was blown and she joined the combatants in the mountains. She fell in

combat on Aug. 31, 1967.

Valdés noted that her mother did not hesitate in deciding that Bunke's remains should be buried in Cuba, as did the relatives of the other fighters. The revolutionaries honored along with Tania, known as well by their noms de guerre, are: Octavio de la Concepción y la Pedraja (Moro), Manuel Hernández Osorio (Miguel), and Mario Gutiérrez Ardaya (Julio) of Cuba; Francisco Huanca Flores (Pablito), Julio Luis Méndez Korne (Nato), Roberto Peredo Leigue (Coco), Aniceto Reinaga Gordillo (Aniceto), and Jaime Arana Campero (Chapaco) of Bolivia; and Edilberto Lucio Galván (Eustaquio), of Peru.

The combatants who together with Che Guevara made up the "reinforcement brigade" welcomed in October 1997 are: Alberto Fernández (Pacho), Orlando Pantoja (Antonio), René Martínez Tamayo (Arturo), and Carlos Coello (Tuma) of Cuba; Simón Cuba (Willy) of Bolivia; and Juan Pablo Chang (Chino) of Peru.

Granma quoted Valdés that in welcom-



Left, Haydée Tamara Bunke, known by her nom de guerre Tania. The aims for which she and others fought in Bolivia "remain both a necessity and an inspiration for the future of Latin America." Above, young women receive military training in Cuba.



ing Tania and the other internationalist fighters, "we can state that the Reinforcement Brigade, now strengthened, is made more invincible — by the power of their example, their morale, and their revolutionary

message — for the present and future generations.... The times, the conditions, and the methods may change, but we can say that 31 years since the fall of Che and his comrades of the Bolivian *guerrilla*, the objectives for which they fought remain both a necessity and an inspiration for the future of Latin America."

Clinton touts 'policy initiatives' on Cuba, maintains aim of overthrowing revolution

BY BILL KALMAN AND ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — U.S. president William Clinton and secretary of state Madeleine Albright announced a series of measures January 5 that they claimed would "ease the plight of the Cuban people." Though touted by the media as a "relaxing" of some of the brutal U.S. sanctions imposed on Cuba, these measures are actually part of Washington's strategy to continue the economic blockade of the island. They flow from the U.S. capitalists' unrelenting hostility towards the Cuban people and their revolution. At the press conference, Albright used the occasion to attack the revolutionary government of Cuba as a "repressive and backward-looking regime."

Later Albright told public television's NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, "We're going to keep our pressure up against Castro. We have bipartisan support for these measures."

The press conference came as the Clinton administration rejected a proposal from 24 Democratic and Republican senators and three Republican former secretaries of state to set up a bipartisan commission to review all aspects of U.S. policy towards Cuba, including the trade embargo. This proposal, whose backers argue for what they hope will be more effective ways to put pressure against the Cuban revolution, was attacked vociferously by many hard-line conservatives and Cuban-American rightists.

The Clinton administration's measures include changing the law so that not only Cuban-Americans but any U.S. residents can now send up to \$1,200 a year to Cuban individuals and "organizations independent of the government"; allowing the sale of some food and agricultural products to "independent nongovernment entities" such as restaurants or co-ops; and increasing "people to people" contact by streamlining the approval process for cultural, athletic, and academic exchanges. In particular, the Clinton administration would allow the Baltimore

Orioles professional baseball team to play two exhibition games against the Cuban national team, one in Baltimore and one in Havana, with proceeds going to Catholic Relief Services. This is part of an administration policy that uses Catholic charities to circumvent the Cuban government.

Other measures announced by Clinton include increasing charter flights to Cuba, reestablishing direct mail service, and "strengthening Radio and TV Martí," which broadcast counterrevolutionary programming from Florida. Another part calls for "launching new public diplomacy programs in Latin America and Europe to keep international attention focused on the need for change in Cuba." Some of these changes, such as the direct mail service to the island and additional flights, will need Cuban government approval to be implemented.

As part of these moves, Clinton named José Collado to succeed Jorge Mas Canosa as chair of the bipartisan Advisory Board for Cuban Broadcasting, which oversees both Radio and TV Martí. This post had been vacant since the death over a year ago of Mas Canosa, who headed the rightist Cuban American National Foundation. Collado is a Democrat and a regional vice-president of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. Collado's resume, supplied by the White House, points out that he was once appointed by then president of the AFL-CIO Lane Kirkland to the organization's anti-Cuban outfit called the Labor Committee for a Free Cuba.

Various rightist politicians in Miami as well as the *Miami Herald* expressed opposition to some of Clinton's measures. Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart, both from Miami, said they would oppose any food sales to Cuba as illegal.

The *Herald*, a vocal opponent of the Cuban revolution, supported Clinton's proposals, along with the continuing economic blockade. The papers editors said they op-

pose the sale of agricultural supplies because "...any such sales could bolster the state, which virtually controls all food production." Peter Romero, acting assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere affairs, explained the government's intentions are "to promote a very nascent, nongovernmental sector in Cuba in a way that they are able to exercise increasing autonomy and, obviously, increase their ranks."

Andrés Gómez, a leader of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, an organization of Cuban-Americans who support the Cuban revolution, told the *Militant*, "The fundamental problems are not being addressed. This is window dressing. There will be more flights from more U.S. cities to more Cuban cities, but Cuban-Americans are still restricted to one visit per year. Others in the U.S. cannot travel legally except with hard-to-gain li-

censes from the U.S. Treasury Department. The planes can fly, but people can't. None of the measures fulfill the needs for normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States."

The *New York Times* quoted Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina saying that Washington's new measures "don't really go to the root of the problem. The root of the problem is still a blockade that is unjust." Robaina had just arrived in Haiti, where the Cuban government has taken the initiative to send volunteer doctors to help meet the dire need for medical care that was exacerbated last year by Hurricane Georges.

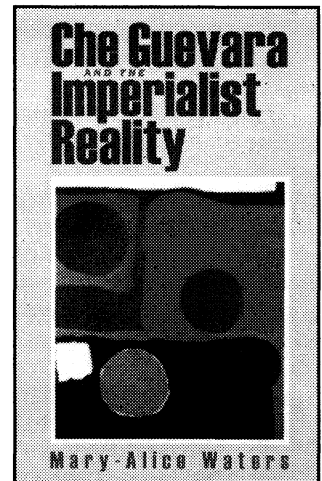
Bill Kalman is a member of the United Transportation Union. Ernest Mailhot is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

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Crisis deepens over Clinton impeachment

Continued from front page

those who are Black — appear to be opposed to the attempt to remove Clinton.

The response by the liberals controlling the White House so far is to refuse to give in to the effort to oust Clinton, while shifting their domestic policy proposals on social programs slightly to the right and accelerating Washington's drive toward war.

Senate majority leader Trent Lott announced January 5 that the president's impeachment trial would begin two days later. At the same time, statements by Lott and a growing number of other Republican politicians indicated that a bipartisan deal floated earlier to avert a lengthy trial and simply censure Clinton was off.

Referring to this plan, Republican senator Larry Craig of Idaho said, "I think it's dead, and finally, I hope it's dead."

The aborted deal would have condensed Clinton's trial to a few days by barring witnesses and then holding "test votes" on whether the two articles of impeachment approved by the House of Representatives warrant Clinton's removal from office. A two-thirds majority is required to oust the president, which most capitalist politicians and pundits have been arguing would be very difficult for the Republicans to muster. The Senate's seats are currently divided 55-45 between Republicans and Democrats. If less than 67 senators found Clinton guilty, the trial could adjourn by a simple majority vote and the Senate would then move towards censure. Before New Year's, the tide was turning against such an arrangement. Senator James Inhofe, a Republican from Oklahoma, called the deal a "whitewash."

According to the January 6 *New York Post*, Sen. Robert Byrd, a Democrat from West Virginia, became the first in Clinton's party to indicate he may vote guilty in the trial. "I could go either way based on the evidence as I've seen or heard it," he said. "And I've followed it closely."

Just three days earlier, several senators from both parties, including Republican Phil Gramm of Texas and Democrat Robert Torricelli of New Jersey, called on Clinton to postpone his State of the Union address, scheduled for January 19, if the impeachment trial is still going on. Lott now says the trial could last into February. The House of Representatives voted to impeach Clinton December 19. The two articles of impeachment that were approved accused Clinton of perjury in his testimony to a federal grand jury, in relation to his affair with former White House employee Monica Lewinsky, and of obstruction of justice.

Offensive from weakness, not strength

Despite repeated predictions to the contrary, rightists seeking Clinton's ouster seem to retake the initiative at each juncture. "The political reality is that conservatives have consistently emerged as the dominant force in the impeachment drive against Mr. Clinton," said an article in the January 6 *Wall Street Journal*. "'The only people who have an endgame in mind are the people who want him out of office,' one Republican said."

This rightist offensive comes from a position of weakness, not strength. U.S. imperialism's economic superiority vis-à-vis its allies in Europe, which are also rivals in trade and markets, has probably peaked. In the middle of a world deflationary crisis that has deeply affected southeast Asia, Russia, and other countries, competition between the imperialist powers has intensified.

The French-based Airbus Industrie has made further inroads against its main rival, the U.S. aerospace giant Boeing. On January 6, Boullion Aviation Services, a U.S. aircraft leasing company founded by a former Boeing executive, announced its first purchase of Airbus jets. The launching of the euro has raised the prospect that not just the U.S. dollar but three main currencies — the dollar, the euro, and the yen — are likely to compete for domination of the world's financial markets, raising the specter of military conflicts among the imperialist powers (see article on page 3).

Anticipation of the closeness and suddenness of such crises is behind the coarsening of bourgeois politics that has become so evident in the year-long scandal.

"In its latest issue, *The National Interest* makes a plausible case that ties between U.S. and Europe are fraying," said the main editorial in the January 4 *Wall Street Journal*, titled "U.S. leadership in doubt." It continued, "Relations with another long-standing

ally, Japan, have not been aided by the Administration's bad economic policy advice." Pointing to what they called "symptoms of waning influence," the editors of the conservative daily stated, "Despite Mr. Clinton's repeated warnings that Saddam's weapons of mass destruction posed a lethal threat to the populations of Western Europe, the U.S. was only able to muster one European ally, Britain, for the attack on Iraq last month. Now, after the attack, Saddam still thumbs his nose and there is no clear evidence of how much the attacks succeeded in 'degrading' his ability to threaten great harm to Europe and the Middle East."

The *Journal's* editors were also uneasy about the results of NATO intervention in Yugoslavia and about worsening relations with Moscow. "The NATO involvement in policing what was left of Bosnia after the war has not contributed much to NATO unity," the editorial said. "Rather, it has exposed underlying tensions, between the U.S. and France, for example.... The Russians, by no means as domesticated as Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott would hope, exploit these divisions."

"Indeed, relations with Russia are at a post-Cold War nadir."

The recent pact between the governments of Belarus and Russia for an economic union and other ties between the two republics has evoked the ire of many capitalist politicians and pundits. "Belarus's chief pursues dream to revive the old Soviet Union," was the headline of a front-page article in the December 27 *New York Times*. Moscow has already defaulted on loans from foreign investors to the tune of \$45 billion. These events have intensified the collision course between Moscow and Washington, especially over NATO expansion into Eastern and Central Europe aimed at positioning U.S. forces closer to Russia's borders in preparation for military attempts to restore the domination of capitalism throughout the former Soviet republics.

Politics of resentment

The "cultural war" offensive by right-wing forces is a response to a shift to the left in bourgeois politics in most imperialist countries, which has been evident for nearly two years and has gone hand-in-hand with a rise of social polarization and Bonapartist figures like Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura (see article on page 4). As working-class resistance to the bosses' belt-tightening demands has intensified in the United States and other capitalist powers, and the

threat of a steep economic downturn has become tangible, a majority in the ruling classes in western Europe and North America have opted, for now, to lower interest rates, speak demagogically of job creation, and distance themselves to a degree from previous proposals to slash social programs. This is how many Democratic Party politicians campaigned leading up to the November 3 elections, in which they made gains, narrowing the Republican majority in Congress. Such promises by the liberals, of course, are nothing but deceit.

The Clinton administration, since the president was first elected in 1992, has worked hard to make domestic policy more bipartisan, leading the employers assault on the rights and social gains of working people. Clinton's "anticrime" and "antiterrorism" bills expanded use of the death penalty; narrowed the right of appeal of the convicted, especially those on death row; and pushed back freedom from illegal search and seizure further than other administrations even dreamed of doing. The president made good on his pledge to "end welfare as we know it," by signing a bill that eliminated federally guaranteed Aid for Families with Dependent Children in 1996. And he has turned the Immigration and Naturalization Service into one of the most heavily armed government agencies that has qualitatively stepped up harassment of immigrant workers and deportations.

All this has not been enough for the right, which demands not only further inroads into social gains but moving towards a complete reversal of affirmative action and even doing away with Social Security altogether. These are among the ultimate goals of ultrarightist politicians, who are the main pushers and beneficiaries of the scandalmongering and "exposés" of the dissoluteness and corruption of Clinton and Co.

In a number of syndicated columns campaigning for removing Clinton from office, Buchanan has used strong language to denounce any deal that would lead to censure and push for a full Senate trial that would prolong and further institutionalize the salacious saga that can best be described as pornographication of politics. "Any deal to abort a trial," Buchanan said in a December 23 column, "would be craven.... Censure is a fraud and a political fix."

In a January 5 column, Buchanan said, "If Lott buys into this deal, he will be handing over 34 liberal Democrats the authority to declare Dick Gephardt and Barney Frank were right and Henry Hyde and Tom DeLay

were wrong." Buchanan was referring here to Democratic congressmen Gephardt and Frank and Republicans Hyde and DeLay. Hyde chaired the House judiciary committee that introduced the articles of impeachment in Congress. Frank is a liberal who has occasionally been singled out by rightists for being gay.

In a January 2 column, titled "Un-American Ivy League," Buchanan denounced those "who have lectured America for years on racism and prejudice" and are "themselves closet bigots" and said that white Catholics and Protestants are discriminated against in college admissions through affirmative action, to the supposed benefit of Jews and Asians.

Conservative politicians at the center of the impeachment drive have their own records of having courted "white citizens only" organizations. Trent Lott has in the past been associated with pro-Confederacy groups. He addressed the Sons of Confederate Veterans and spoke to *Southern Partisan*, a magazine that extols the virtues of the slaveholders' Confederacy. He also addressed members of the Council of Conservative Citizens in 1992, though he later distanced himself from the organization and its racist views.

In a column in the January 7 *New York Times*, Bob Herbert quoted a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center, an Alabama group that monitors racist outfits. The report stated, "The Council of Conservatives is the reincarnation of the racist White Citizens Councils of the 1950s and 1960s."

Sensing that the "cultural war" offensive by the rightists is aimed not primarily at Clinton but at reversing social gains won in struggle, millions of working people have opposed the impeachment. Most opinion polls have shown that large majorities oppose the attempts to remove Clinton from office — an indication that many working people have steered clear of the trap of the politics of resentment laid by the ultraright.

The union tops of the AFL-CIO have tried to channel this sentiment into political support for the Democratic Party. They have organized a number of "anti-impeachment" rallies to back Clinton and his policies, including offering support for the bombing of Iraq. And groups on the left like the Communist Party USA have campaigned against impeachment by throwing more of their support behind an array of liberal politicians.

The response by the liberals in Congress and the White House has been to stick to

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UN 'inspectors' were U.S. government spies

Continued from Page 3

acknowledged January 6 that U.S. spies were part of the "inspection" teams.

According to the January 6 *Washington Post*, UN secretary general Kofi Annan said he had proof that UN "weapons inspectors" used their so-called arm search program to eavesdrop for Washington on sensitive discussions among Iraqi government officials.

The *Boston Globe* reported that surveillance equipment permitted the snoopers to listen in on radio, cell phone, and walkie-talkie communications by members of the Iraqi security network. Former "inspector" Scott Ritter asserted that last March Washington pushed aside the British and Israeli spy team and took over the operation itself.

Washington floats new bombing plans

Washington has run into a brick wall in its aims to topple the Iraqi government and replace it with a protectorate beholden to U.S. interests. Iraq contains some 10 percent of the Earth's oil reserves — more than any country in the world except Saudi Arabia, and more than Canada, Mexico, and the United States combined.

In addition to wanting control of this resource, Washington has sought to create a subservient regime that can police the region for U.S. imperialism, as the Iranian monarch did until he was overthrown by the Iranian toilers in a massive revolution in 1979.

With no stomach for launching a major ground invasion or a sustained bombing campaign, the Clinton administration has resorted to intermittent air strikes on the Iraqi people. The White House has begun to publicly float preparations for bombing the airfields where Iraqi jets took off. "We

have those kinds of plans on the shelf," said Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Shelton, in response to this suggestion from Sen. John McCain.

Clinton's aggression has posed a dilemma for Arab regimes in the region as political instability intensifies amid growing pressures on them to condemn the punishing sanctions imposed on the Iraqi people. Citing rising temperatures since the December air strikes, London's *Financial Times* reported January 6 that the U.S. embassy in Cairo alleged it received threats of "imminent unspecified attacks against US inter-

ests in Egypt." Following the four-day blitz, anti-imperialist protests numbering in the thousands and tens of thousands erupted in Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, and the West Bank.

The 22-member Arab League postponed until January 24 a meeting of Arab foreign ministers to discuss the bombing raids on Iraq. "The meeting would have told the world and the Iraqi population that Iraq's isolation was over," said an Iraqi government official, charging that the governments in Egypt and Saudi Arabia sought the delay to defuse rising outrage over the bombing.

Clarification on Illinois miners strike

Two paragraphs were left out of the article in the January 11 *Militant* on the settlement of the 98-day coal strike in central Illinois. This was not the fault of the *Militant*, but due to a problem with my computer. [The article "Illinois miners are stronger from strike," by Betsey Stone and Cappy Kidd, appeared on the front page of the January 11 issue.]

What was left out was part of the explanation of why a majority of workers at the three mines voted to accept a contract that included big concessions, including a weakening of seniority protection in job assignments and recall from layoffs.

The article included the fact that company threats to hire permanent replacements and close the mines were an important influence in pressuring the miners to vote yes. What was left out were

the following paragraphs:

"Many miners said workers who were wavering, but decided in the end to vote yes, were influenced by the stance of the representatives from the United Mine Workers International in favor of the contract."

"Frank Hasquin, a longtime miner and stalwart of the strike, put it this way, 'If the International representatives are telling the public in press interviews they hope the contract will be ratified, miners understand it makes it harder for us to win support for a continuing fight on something like seniority.'"

Please print this letter with this additional point, since without it, the explanation is incomplete.

Betsey Stone
Chicago, Illinois

Aluminum strike

Continued from front page

to keep his or her job assignment, with failure to do so leading to termination.

The plant dominates the two bordering towns of Gramercy and Lusher, whose combined population is about 7,000. The other major employer in the area is the Colonial sugar mill, situated next to the Kaiser plant, both along the banks of the Mississippi River. Most of the product sent out of the Gramercy plant is shipped up the river in barges. There is a steady stream of honks from cars and trucks, as drivers passing by show their solidarity with the strikers.

The company is using the union-busting outfit Vance Security in an attempt to intimidate strikers. These thugs videotape the picket line and have set up microphones to pick up strikers' conversations.

Kaiser is also using a contracting outfit named Harmony to hire scabs, with people coming from other states as well as nearby towns in Texas and Louisiana. While there has been a big turnover, strikers reported, Kaiser is currently running the plant with 280 workers, down from the high of 600 at the beginning of the strike. The company has made claims that productivity is around 80 percent. But according to striking maintenance worker Paul Deroche, "they are having problems with quality. We've heard that product has been rejected by some customers."

Despite a recent unfavorable injunction against the union, pickets continue around the clock. Louisiana law permits pickets to block traffic going in and out of a plant being struck. Until this injunction the strikers were operating under a ruling from the 1993-96 Bayou Steel strike that restricted the time permitted to delay traffic to 90 seconds. The latest injunction cuts this time in half and limits to one the number of pickets permitted to actually walk in front of and delay each vehicle.

As was the case under the 90-second rule,

the strikers are using the allowed 45 seconds to create a disciplined, serious presence in the face of company attempts to run production unimpeded. The strikers have also been forced back to the edge of the road where the plant entrance is, reversing a previous setup where the company had agreed to the sheriff's request to move its fence some yards back, allowing pickets to stand a safer distance from traffic along the major thoroughfare.

Many strikers are working other jobs to cover bills while the fight goes on, including working turnaround jobs in local refineries. Strikers and their families are especially affected by the loss of medical coverage, which was provided at no extra cost under the old contract. To maintain their coverage, many are paying between \$300 and \$400 a month.

The conditions Kaiser would like to impose are familiar to members of the striking local because some of the workers in their local have faced the same takebacks from another company. Kaiser sold the chemical and coker units of the Gramercy plant, with about 175 and 30 workers respectively, to the chemical company La Roche in 1988. The coker was subsequently sold to a company called CII Carbon. There was a fight over the contract for the coker unit. USWA members had been working under the company's final offer when they were locked out, accused of sabotage by the company. The company fired three workers they claimed were responsible for the so-called sabotage. A grand jury was convened to consider charges against the three workers but declined to indict anyone.

The union filed and won a ruling against the lockout by the National Labor Relations Board, which the company appealed. The appeal is scheduled to be heard in the coming months. In the meantime the company was forced to allow workers to return to the plant last summer, except for the three they



Militant/Roberto Guerrero

Steelworkers picket Kaiser Aluminum in Gramercy, Louisiana, in late December. Sign in center reads: "Welcome to 'Camp Creole,' Scabs not welcome." Workers are determined to push back the bosses' union-busting contract proposals.

fired, and they have since been working under the newly implemented terms. Wayne Stafford, president of Local 5702, explained these include a form of "the skill block program," which means the company awards jobs on the basis of "skill" instead of seniority.

Strikers are closely following similar labor battles. Literature about the Steelworkers on strike against Titan Tire in Des Moines, Iowa, and Natchez, Mississippi, is spread around the union hall.

In addition, 400 USWA members are on strike against Southwire in Hawesville, Kentucky, one of Kaiser-Gramercy's biggest

customers. The workers have been on strike since June 26, 1998, in an effort to win a union contract, which would be the first one at a Southwire plant if they succeed. The workers won a union election vote in 1997. The strike was called to protest unfair labor practices, including attempts to push people to quit the union. They are also fighting to get a union contract, for a retirement plan, vacation time that was taken away in the past, and other benefits.

Phil Duzinski and Laura Garza are members of the International Association of Machinists in Houston.

What Northwest Airlines workers need is a unified fight for a contract and labor solidarity

BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The November 20 victory of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) over the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in a representation election at Northwest Airlines separated 9,500 mechanics and cleaners from other unionists who are ground operations workers at Northwest.

AMFA officials campaigned against the idea of labor solidarity and unity. IAM officials haven't organized effectively, either, to lead a fight to defend the interests of union members. Many of those who voted for

facing company victimization.

It also hurts those workers who face the challenge of forging a similar fight among AMFA members. Many of these workers are sure to come to the conclusion that the divisiveness and pro-company policies of AMFA officials must be opposed.

Reject all fingering of co-workers

Both the IAM tops and some AMFA supporters have fingered co-workers to the company, which should be rejected by all rank-and-file unionists. Such actions are deeply detrimental to the working class, destroying the potential to trust and rely on each other in the class battle we are engaged in to defend our living standard and democratic rights. We need to fight to expand — not limit — the right for political debate and campaigning on the job, including over union questions.

Following these developments some workers have focused their anger on one another — ramp workers blaming mechanics for our weakened situation in relation to the company and vice versa.

Some ramp workers have said, "To hell with the mechanics!" and argue that the best course for ramp workers is take over as many of the mechanics job functions as possible — pushing back the aircraft, adding oil to the engines, and changing tires. This will mean that scores of mechanics will lose their jobs. The ramp workers have no interest in campaigning for such job combinations and speedup. This course only pits workers against each other and plays into the company's divide-and-conquer strategy.

Workers at Northwest Airlines also have no interest in another election right now that would again pit IAM and AMFA officials against each other. Our interests lie in more class-struggle battles unfolding, more opportunities for us to flex our muscle and learn to mobilize our strength against the bosses. This is the course that will advance the interests of all union fighters at Northwest.

Class-conscious workers who fought vigorously against the political views advanced by AMFA officials must now move on. We must not get blinded by or fixated on the

structures and the organizational forms that come out of the shattering and restructuring of the union institutions. This shake up will continue under the impact of the polarization of political views, which accompanies the world economic crisis of the capitalism. Whatever structures exist, our eyes must be on the rank-and-file workers and we must turn our efforts to utilizing whatever forms exist to defend our interests.

The battle for workers' unity today

All unionists at Northwest — 10,000 Teamsters—organized flight attendants, 9,500 aircraft mechanics and cleaners represented by AMFA, and 17,000 other ground operations workers organized by the Machinists — hold in common objective interests and challenges.

We all work for Northwest Airlines and none of us have new contracts, 27 months after the previous ones expired. In July the vast majority of workers in the IAM, including mechanics, cleaners, and ramp workers, turned down the company's contract offer.

No new contract means we have made no progress on winning protection against farming out of union jobs or against layoffs. Likewise, none of us have won the wage raise needed to begin to try to catch up on the effects of the multimillion dollar pay cut we took in 1993. And retirees pensions remain at levels well below industry averages.

Most importantly, as the Northwest bosses' profit crisis deepens, we need to transform our ranks into a battle-ready, confident, and unified workforce that can resist the next wave of concessions demanded of us.

We should look for allies in this fight for a contract and for a strengthened union. The flight attendants have led the way in organizing mass leafleting and informational picketing days at several airports on many occasions over the past year.

Another example we can point to is the joint action held by Alaska Air and Northwest Airlines workers who rallied at the Seattle-Tacoma airport in November to demand a just contract. More such protests are needed. The favorable contract won by the Northwest pilots after a two-week strike in

September weighs in on the side of the contract fight facing the rest of the Northwest workers. We should invite the pilots to raise their voices on behalf of all those without a new contract at Northwest.

The ongoing struggle waged by Sky Chefs workers in London against cutting the catering crews to one person deserves public support, especially from airline workers. The Sky Chefs workers are resisting the safety hazards and the speedup already implemented in the United States, including at the airport where I work.

We can also look beyond the airline industry to labor battles and social struggles being waged around issues of vital importance to workers everywhere, such as the many actions recently organized around the country to protest U.S. war moves against the people of Iraq, and the strike of coal miners at Freeman Coal in Illinois who battled for more than three months resisting the company's attempt to gut seniority provisions and cut medical benefits to retirees.

In the course of this kind of struggle we can forge a union capable of defending the most vulnerable workers — new hires, immigrant workers, women, Black workers, members of all oppressed nationalities who face discrimination, and older workers who after a lifetime of work are trying to make it safely through their final working years and be able to afford to retire.

A union that can organize the unorganized on a massive scale and will demand that safety for airline workers and the flying public come before corporate profits. To get this requires transforming our unions and ultimately transforming society.

To make any headway as workers, from winning a decent contract to fighting the company's assault on the unions, workers at Northwest Airlines need to reject the notion that we are each other's problem. Instead we should fight to unify our ranks based on labor solidarity and class-conscious ideas necessary for defending and advancing our interests as workers.

Mary Martin is a member of IAM Local 1759 on the ramp at Northwest Airlines at Washington National Airport.

UNION TALK

AMFA did so because they wanted to vote for a change in the status quo of the union officialdom they've experienced.

IAM officials, in a bid to stave off AMFA, attempted to match AMFA's 'elite and separate' concept by offering to set up a separate union district within the IAM just for mechanics and related jobs, leaving the rest of the ramp, clerical, and other workers in the existing union district. This move — not yet abandoned by the IAM officials, despite the AMFA win — goes in the opposite direction of unifying the work force and strengthening the union.

Similarly wrong-headed is one of the IAM officialdom's main challenges to the AMFA election victory, on the grounds that the company gave pro-AMFA workers permission to campaign during work hours, permission which the IAM says it was denied. The IAM's challenge actually worsens the situation for workers at Northwest, and especially for workers on the company's disciplinary list, by providing sworn statements, at least one photo, and names of several workers alleged to have carried out pro-AMFA campaigning while on the job, in supposed violation of company rules.

The IAM's challenge of the AMFA election is an obstacle to organizing the fight that's needed to transform the IAM into an instrument that will defend all the workers

NATO threatens Yugoslavia intervention

Continued from Page 16

stop the regime in Belgrade, and Milosevic." At the same time, Dugolli said "there are a lot of diplomats who treat Milosevic as a partner for peace, a partner for negotiations." Dugolli is also aware that the imperialist powers involved in the NATO operation do not act out of support for the rights of Albanians. "You can't say that there's no NATO interest. This is not just about Kosova. Everyone knows NATO wants to stop Russia having influence in the Balkans."

Evolution of independence struggle

Dugolli described the development of the current struggle as the evolution of the protests which the students sparked, beginning November 1997, demanding Albanian students be given access to university buildings they had been evicted from and education in their own language. "At the same time as we were demanding the freeing of the university buildings, we were warning that this was the last chance to do anything concrete. The international community didn't do anything, their support was just verbal, not enough to stop the conflict. We began to organize self-defense and this became a liberation movement of Albanians. During this time the UCK has become the main military and political factor in Kosova, the only force defending Albanians, and also defending Muslims, Serbs, and Montenegrans not implicated in the war."

The students' protests ceased in March 1998. "After the massacres began, the air was politicized by the fumes of burning children. We breathe that air too. Release of the university facilities is not very important at the moment. We are sure we will get them back, because we built them, they are ours," Dugolli said. He noted many university students have gone back to their home villages to volunteer.

Many workers have been joining the UCK, said Agim Hajrizi, president of the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosova, though this is not being organized by the union. Giving the example of the Ferronickel and munitions plant in Skenderaj, Hajrizi said that the Albanian workers there were first dismissed from their jobs in 1991. Then in 1997 their homes were destroyed. "They have been forced to go to the UCK to protect what they have left," he noted.

Securing the ability of 300,000 refugees

California cops

Continued from front page

and called her cousins for help. When her relatives arrived at the gas station, they found her locked inside the car and unconscious. She seemed to be having a seizure. Alarmed by this, they called 911 for medical help. Instead of doctors, the police arrived.

Rev. Bernell Butler, Tyisha Miller's uncle and a spokesman for the family, said, "The police arrived in a 'shoot' state of mind, a 'kill' state of mind. The police version of what happened keeps changing. First they say they arrived and she had a gun in her hand, she started waving it at them, and then fired it. Then the police had to drop the part about her firing the gun, then they had to drop the part about her waving the gun. We really don't know if there was a gun in the car at all. We do know that she was unconscious the whole time the police were there."

Four police officers fired off their semi-automatic handguns at Miller, leaving 27 casings on the ground around the car. A coroner's report showed that the young woman was shot four times in the head, once in the chest, and seven other places.

Before the autopsy report was released on Thursday, December 31, more than 150 people gathered at a meeting organized by Black leaders to ask police about the investigation. Butler stated that what is needed is for the city of Riverside to indict the four cops on charges of murder, so that a trial can take place. "The police here have a shameful history of violence, against Blacks, against immigrants, and against others. Who gave them the power of God?"

Antoine Jones, another of Miller's uncles, added, "They say the cops are paid to protect us but we've never seen it. Blacks, poor whites, Mexicans—we're just statistics to them."

Another demonstration has been called for January 7 to protest the killing. Miller's family and others are also publicizing the funeral, which will take place two days later.

to return was touted as a major achievement of the Milosevic-Holbrooke agreement. But the reality isn't so simple.

Baroni described the situation in Mitrovica, "an industrial town with all the workers fired." At the height of the government offensive, the population of 120,000 — 85 percent of whom are Albanian — swelled to around 168,000 people. Baroni explained that while some of the refugees had returned to their villages since the cease-fire, many have nowhere to go. More than 780 houses were destroyed in 20 villages in the area, and many more damaged. Thousands of Albanian families in towns like Mitrovica are hosting displaced people from the countryside. The commander of the UCK brigade in the village of Llausha, in Drenica pointed out that 220 houses had been destroyed there, so "half the village is not here."

At the UCK guardpost just outside Llausha, just one kilometer from the nearest Serbian government forces, we spoke to commander Geqi of the 119 Brigade, 1st Battalion. This is a farming area where most families used to have members working in industry. Now they survive with subsistence farming and aid from relatives abroad. The main factory in the area is now a base for the Belgrade government army. In this hard-hit village, as in the whole area, there is substantial evidence of the defense that has been built since the first assault in March. While the main roads are controlled by the Belgrade government's forces, the Albanian flag can be seen flying from hilltops, marking posts of the UCK. Outsiders traveling in the area need permission both from the Belgrade government authorities and from the UCK.

People in the villages have no problem pointing out the location of UCK units. The 119 Brigade is made up of the sons and a

few daughters of the farmers and workers in the Llausha area. "The people who live here are all soldiers," said Geqi. He testified to the renewed buildup of Belgrade's forces. "We have been hearing shooting since early December. Milosevic was the first to sign the cease-fire, but he is the one bringing back forces. They were just hidden from the asphalt road." The rebel soldier added, "We are here and we haven't anywhere else to go. We will respond with all we have." Geqi stated that the UCK can take care of defense and called on NATO to remove Milosevic.

Self-determination is a necessity

For the trade unions in Kosova, too, the resolution of the fight for self-determination is seen as a precondition to resolving other questions facing working people. "Serbia is an occupier — it is impossible to continue without a political solution," said Hajrizi of the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosova. He said 150,000 workers have been dismissed from their jobs since 1989. Of the 38,000 union members who do have some kind of work, most have not been paid for months. At one construction site in Podujevo, workers are paid in building materials.

In the recent military offensives, many factories have been occupied by Belgrade's military forces. Many union members have been killed on the way to work or abused at army checkpoints on their way.

Despite the continued threat of air strikes by NATO, several drafts of a "peace plan" pushed by the U.S. government have been rejected by the Milosevic regime as well as by several Kosovar leaders of political parties involved in the negotiations. With the increase in sporadic fighting, European Union envoy Wolfgang Petritsch along with

diplomats of the Contact Group — made up of representatives of the governments of the United States, Russia, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy — have been in Kosova since December 19 pressuring Albanian leaders into renewed negotiations with the regime in Belgrade. While rejecting Albanians demand for independence of Kosova, Petritsch called on the UCK to "renounce violence if it wants to join talks."

The struggle of the Albanians in Kosova is directly tied to the struggle of the Albanians in the neighboring Republic of Macedonia for national rights. Albanians in Macedonia are an oppressed nationality constituting a third of the population there, concentrated in areas near Kosova. Arben Xhaferi, president of the Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSH) told Reuters on December 17, "We are asking for progress on rights, in matters of education, language, and employment." The PDSH participates in the recently elected coalition government. "If there is no progress," Xhaferi warned, "we could face the same situation as in Kosova. I will begin to lose my credibility and my function in society, just like Rugova has" in Kosova.

On December 29 Macedonia's parliament passed an amnesty law under which Alaidin Demiri, mayor of Tetovo, and Rufi Osmani, mayor of Gostivar, as well as the presidents of both city councils are to be released from prison. They had been convicted in 1997 of defying a law by the Macedonian government that prohibited flying the Albanian flag publicly. Thousands of Albanians who see this flag as a symbol of their national identity and dignity protested this law.

Bobbis Misailides contributed to this article.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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The Impeachment of William Clinton and the Crisis of Capitalist Politics. Fri., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m. 230 Auburn Ave. (Corner of Butler). Donation: \$4. Tel: (404) 577-7976.

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Farm Crisis Deepens. Speakers: Larry Ginter, hog farmer; Ray Parsons, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 2724 Douglas Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (515) 277-4600.

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How to Answer the Stepped-up Drive to Ex-

ecute Mumia Abu-Jamal: The Politics of Fighting a Racist Frame-up and the Death Penalty. Showing of video: "Mumia Abu-Jamal: Case for a Reasonable Doubt." Fri., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South Street (at 19th). Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

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Capitalism's Worldwide Crisis Drives the Continuing Attacks Against Iraq. Fri., Jan. 15, 7 p.m. 47, The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 0171 928 7993.

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Imperialist Troops Out of Yugoslavia! Eyewitness Report from Kosova. Speaker: Anne Howie, Communist League, who participated in a *Militant* reporting team. Fri., Jan. 15, 7 p.m.

Upstairs, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 0161-839-1766.

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Exploitation of Owner Drivers: Experience of the TranzLink Dispute. Speakers: Two drivers from the recent protests against TranzLink concession contracts. Fri., Jan. 15, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

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Celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Socialist Revolution in the Americas. The Cuban Revolution 1959—Today. Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 15, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

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Law 'n order — In Detroit, Timothy Boomer fell from a canoe into the Rifle River and hollered to his friends for help. A County prosecutor asserted that Boomer uttered an



Harry Ring

obscurity, in violation of a 101-year-old law. If convicted, he faces 90 days in jail and a \$100 fine.

Fed up? — Toulouse, France: Rioting youth smashed a police station and threw stones and petrol bombs at the police to avenge the death of a friend that morning. Six policemen were injured in the clashes. No youths were reported injured. At least 150 police faced up to at least 200 youth on a rampage in Remeric, a working-class district. "The rampage was triggered by the shooting of a youth by a stray police bullet, police said." — AP. Dec. 4, '98.

But please, no virtual plastic — A new web site (Jesus 2000. com)

calls itself "The Holy Land's Largest Shopping Mall on the Internet." Xmas Eve it featured a cyber-midnight mass live from Bethlehem. Virtual pilgrims can purchase olive wood crosses, mother of pearl rosaries, and other religious trinkets from the Holy City.

Is that my computer shaking? — "The famous 1980 film, 'The China Syndrome,' depicts Jack Lemmon as nuclear power engineer. His memorable line: 'I can feel it,' referred to the rumbling of an incipient Chernobyl-style nuclear accident. A contemporary version would

have referred to trembles in the world financial market." — Investment banker Roger Altman.

Equality for all — Convicted swindler Redman has begun serving his term. A real estate shark he sold several million dollars worth of homes on virtually useless high desert land, mainly to low-income Latinos. He was given a year of "alternate confinement" at home, and fined \$10,000.

No place like home — In a three-month period, California Realtors sold a record 1,555 \$1-million homes. Top sale was a Los Angeles pad

with seven bathrooms and five bedrooms. \$10 million.

Oh, and by the way — Waiting tables, cashiering, and retail sales are among California's top job opportunities. Some pay almost \$16,000 a year.

Thought for the week — "The bad news is the uncertainty in the streets. Every day you wake up not knowing if there's going to be a demonstration in the streets and if the demonstration is going to get out of control." — An unidentified "senior U.S. official responsible for Indonesia."

Cuba's place in rebuilding world communist movement

The selection below is from "U.S. Imperialism has Lost the Cold War," a resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party at its national convention in 1990. This excerpt is the opening portion of Part 4 of the resolution, titled "Rebuilding a World Communist Movement." The entire document is published in issue no. 11 of the Marxist magazine *New International*. Copyright © 1998 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

1. The leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba is the first since the Bolsheviks to give communist guidance to the development of a workers state. In the face of unrelenting U.S. imperialist economic, political, and military pressures, that leadership has maintained a revolutionary course at the

BOOK OF THE WEEK

helm of the Cuban government for more than thirty-one years. In the process it has

a) reknit one of the strands of communist continuity that had been broken since the Stalinist counterrevolution that destroyed the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International by the end of the 1920s; and

b) established a current truly worthy of the name communist — the first outside of the direct continuity of the small nucleus of Bolshevik-Leninists, including the Socialist Workers Party, that had stood alone from the late 1920s through the 1950s.

2. The leadership team headed by Fidel Castro successfully bypassed the obstacle presented by a large Stalinist party and led the toilers in making a revolution and establishing a workers and farmers government.

a) Building on that revolutionary victory, this leadership deepened popular mobilizations culminating in the expropriation of the foreign and domestic capitalists and landlords. On that foundation, a workers state was established.

b) Unlike the workers states in Eastern and Central Europe and Asia established following World War II, the new Cuban workers state was not bureaucratically deformed from birth in a qualitative way by the domination of an increasingly crystallized petty-bourgeois caste.

c) The leadership team headed by Castro led the revolution forward in such a way that it began the construction of socialism instead of veering onto a trajectory that

led toward a system worse than capitalism.

d) In the process of advancing these tasks, this leadership forged a mass proletarian communist party that follows a revolutionary internationalist course.

3. This "subjective factor" — the genuinely internationalist character of the proletarian vanguard guiding the workers state in Cuba — is the most important objective outcome and contribution of the Cuban revolution. The consequences for the revolution's domestic and international trajectories are inextricably intertwined.

a) Cuban communists are revolutionists of action, as modern communists have been since the revolutions of 1847-48 in Europe.¹

b) The communist course charted by such a leadership of the working class is the fundamental precondition to advancing toward the construction of socialism on the economic foundations of a workers state; it is a precondition to catching and rectifying major errors in this process.

c) Cuba has become a powerful objective force in world politics, beyond all bourgeois or petty-bourgeois measures of its "geopolitical" or economic weight.

4. Revolutionary Cuba's policy is to conduct relations with other political forces in the world according to proletarian internationalist principle.

a) The 1975 *Programmatic Platform of the Communist Party of Cuba* states that the party's policy is "subordination . . . of the interests of Cuba to the general interests of the struggle for socialism and communism, of national liberation, of the defeat of imperialism and the elimination of colonialism, neocolonialism and all forms of exploitation and discrimination. . . ."²

b) The test of the internationalist course of the Communist Party leadership in Cuba has been met above all in their deeds.

(1) They have provided unstinting political solidarity, economic and social assistance, expertise, and military volunteers to revolutionary struggles and governments under fire by imperialism — from Vietnam to the Middle East, from Africa to the Americas.

(2) The defeat of the South African army at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale is the latest example, with the most far-reaching consequences, of Cuban communists marshaling the resources of the dictatorship of the proletariat to advance revolutionary struggles worldwide.

c) In pursuing its internationalist course, the Communist Party of Cuba

(1) seeks to advance an uncompromising struggle against imperialist domination anywhere in the world;

(2) refuses to subordinate the interests of workers and peasants to the preservation of capitalist property and prerogatives;

(3) seeks collaboration with other revolutionists of action, whether communists or not; and

(4) approaches the ranks of fighters not as objects to be deployed, but as revolutionists.

1. For a summary of the strategic conclusions the founders of the modern communist workers movement drew from those revolutionary struggles and their own active participation in them, see "Communism and the Fight for a Popular Revolutionary Government: 1848 to Today" by Mary-Alice Waters in *New International* no. 3.

2. *Programmatic Platform of the Communist Party of Cuba* (Havana: Department of Revolutionary Orientation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, 1976), p. 120-21.

lutionary leaders in becoming, with no a priori limits on what they can accomplish.

d) The internationalist course of the Communist Party of Cuba has strengthened the defense of the revolution against imperialist aggression.

(1) Growing awareness of the international weight and historic responsibilities of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Cuba has been key to the communist vanguard's capacity to successfully organize and mobilize the workers and farmers to stand up to imperialism's pressures and attacks for more than three decades.

(a) Willingness to make sacrifices to help others who are fighting imperialism has increased consciousness of the stakes involved in advancing the Cuban revolution.

(b) Voluntary participation in internationalist missions reinforced awareness that only through rising communist consciousness and increasing voluntary work could the revolution advance at home.

(2) Cuba's anti-imperialism has been bold but not reckless. Its policies have demonstrated that

(a) by subordinating the pace and character of transforming domestic social relations to the needs of the world struggle against imperialism (e.g., the material aid and human resources devoted to helping Angola defend itself), the progress and defense of the revolution is enhanced;

(b) the extension of the world revolution



Hundreds of thousands of Cuban troops served in Angola as part of the revolutionary internationalist missions. Above, Cuban volunteers there in February 1990.

lution is of decisive importance to the pace and even the possibility of constructing socialism; and

(c) the only effective way of standing up to imperialism's relentless offensive is through continuously deepening the conscious leadership and voluntary participation of working people in the economy, in politics, in the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle, and in the revolution's defense.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

January 11, 1974

It took a federal jury less than an hour to find three Indians innocent of government charges stemming from the November 1972 occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington, D.C.

Keever Locklear, Dock Locklear, and William Sergeant were acquitted Dec. 19 on a series of charges, including possession of stolen BIA documents and threatening FBI agents.

The documents — containing secret information on how the government oppresses Indians — were taken during the occupation in order to bring the truth about the BIA's role to the public.

The trial itself was one more example of the thousands of broken promises made by the government to Indians.

At the end of the BIA take-over, federal officials made an agreement with the protesters that no one would be prosecuted for the action. Judge Arthur Stanley — a one-time sergeant in the Seventh Cavalry — wouldn't even allow this evidence in court, but the case fell through anyway.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

January 10, 1949

Despite a pouring rain, members of the Socialist Workers Party picketed the Dutch Consulate here tonight in protest against the Dutch government's ruthless attack on the Indonesian Republic. The call for the demonstration was issued by the American Labor Party in conjunction with two other Stalinist-front organizations. The New York Local of the SWP came to the demonstration in good faith, believing that the addition of its forces would increase the impact of the action. The SWP members had barely joined the picket line when Stalinist leaders demanded their withdrawal and got the captain in charge of a police detachment to eject them from the line.

The SWP then formed its own line adjacent to the Stalinists and continued demonstrating. Before the action was finished, the SWP line was twice as large as the Stalinists'.

The SWP distributed a leaflet denouncing Dutch imperialism and exposing Washington's role in the rape of Indonesia. It hailed the Indonesian Trotskyists in their "revolutionary struggle for complete and unconditional independence of Indonesia."

New International ■ no. 11

New International
U.S. IMPERIALISM HAS LOST THE COLD WAR
Jack Barnes

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War
JACK BARNES
Also:
• IN THIS ISSUE:
Ours is the Epoch of World Revolution
JACK BARNES AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

• Socialism: A Viable Option
JOSE RAMON BALAGUER
• Young Socialists Manifesto
Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

U.S. troops out of the Mideast!

Working people should denounce Washington's arrogant enforcement of the "no-fly zone" it has imposed on Iraq and demand all imperialist troops get out of the Arab-Persian Gulf now. Opponents of this unrelenting aggression need to deepen the steady campaign to get out the truth about U.S. imperialism and its war moves. We should press for an immediate, unconditional end to the draconian sanctions that are devastating the lives of millions of Iraqi people. Baghdad has the right to defend its territory and fire on intruders invading its airspace, especially those who slaughtered more than 150,000 Iraqis in the 1990-91 Gulf war and have bombed the country several times since.

Washington's casual use of its military might highlights the reality that more military action is coming against workers and peasants around the world. Already, Clinton administration officials have plans "on the shelf" for bombing Iraqi airfields. The "no-fly zones" that Washington and London have imposed on two-thirds of Iraq's airspace for more than six years serve as a ready-made pretext for launching more bombing attacks. The spying "inspectors" served the same purpose.

The class of billionaire families that rules the United States has no way to accomplish its objectives in the Middle East short of an invasion with ground troops. They are politically weaker and further away from overthrowing the government of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein in order to establish an imperialist protectorate and bolster their dominance in the Arab-Persian Gulf region.

Instead the most recent bombings have generated more hatred of U.S. imperialism throughout the Arab world, increasing social upheaval and instability in the region, which the imperialist powers are less able to suppress. This coincides with intensifying pressures — throughout the Middle East, from Moscow, and from Paris — to ease the devastating sanctions imposed on the Iraqi people for more than eight years. And the U.S. rulers can muster even less support today from their allies, who are also rivals, for military actions. Washington's hegemony in Europe

through the NATO military alliance is being challenged by other imperialists, especially by the rulers of France.

Washington's assault on the Iraqi people "is a war over economic domination and control," states the article titled "Working-class campaign against imperialism and war," in issue no. 7 of the magazine *New Internationalist*. The U.S. rulers' war moves are aimed "against other propertied classes in other countries for the domination of raw materials, markets, and access to superexploitation of low-paid labor." The bombardment of Iraq is also part of tightening a military ring around the southern flank of Russia as the U.S. imperialists prepare for the day they will attempt to use force to reestablish capitalist property relations there. The deflationary crisis of world capitalism has accelerated the conflicts between Washington and its rivals. This competition is the primary motor behind the U.S. rulers' policy against Iraq, shared by the Democrats and Republicans alike.

The assault on Iraq is an extension of the U.S. rulers' barbarity and attacks on the rights of workers and farmers at home — from the greater use of the police and hired thugs against workers on strike to the stepped-up executions, police brutality, deportations, and government attacks on affirmative action. That's why the *Militant* urges its supporters to broaden their campaign against imperialism and war by stepping up discussions among co-workers on the job, at plant gates, on campuses, among farmers, and in working-class communities. Encourage them to join in protests, speak-outs, and forums discussing the U.S. assault on Iraq. Sell and study the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, especially issue no. 11 featuring the article "U.S. Imperialism has Lost the Cold War" and issue no. 7, with "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq." Above all, this effort must be a steady, week-by-week campaign to win working people to demand: All imperialist troops out of the Middle East! End the sanctions against Iraq! Lift the no-fly zones! U.S. hands off Iraq!

Oppose Clinton impeachment

Working people should oppose the attempt by rightist politicians to unseat William Jefferson Clinton with their demagogic cries of moral turpitude and the use of one of the most undemocratic parts of the U.S. constitution.

Before Clinton entered the White House he was groomed by the liberal wing of the ruling class to carry out a bipartisan shift to the right on domestic policy. He became and has remained president as the death-penalty man. The "end-welfare-as-we-know-it" man. The man who signed the Defense of Marriage Act, which bans same-sex marriages, a flagrant intrusion by the state into people's private lives. The man who has turned the hated *la migrá* into an armed fortress of the government to push increasing numbers of immigrant workers into pariah status. Clinton is now leading, in the faithful traditions of modern liberalism, U.S. imperialism's march toward war.

But Clinton is not being attacked from the right for being a warmaker or for trampling on the rights working people have won in struggle. The impeachment offensive has the same aims as the "cultural war" that's the stock-in-trade of incipient fascist politicians like Patrick Buchanan: to drag the working class into the pit of the politics of resentment and economic nationalism along with the declining capitalist class. That's exactly what the Nazis pushed in the 1920s and early 1930s, as they decried the "filth" of the Weimar Republic.

As this salacious saga unfolds, bourgeois politicians of all stripes attempt to sow confusion among working people about the alleged virtues of "representative democracy," that is, imperialist democracy. Buchanan's January 5 column, for example, arguing for a trial and ousting of Clinton was titled "The Constitution cannot be circumvented."

The complicated system of "checks and balances," of which impeachment is one device, was crafted into the U.S. Constitution not to guarantee majority rule, but precisely to prevent it. The entire constitution was based on the twin principles of protection of private property and rule by the wealthy minority. The impeachment provision was included for mediating and resolving competing interests among the rulers. The "Founding Fathers" gave the population no vote on whether to remove a president from office before the end of four years, jealously reserving such a powerful weapon for themselves.

When the AFL-CIO tops, liberal civil rights groups, or organizations such as the Communist Party USA support Clinton politically, or at least as a "lesser evil," while opposing impeachment, they not only support the system that is the source of the long-term rightward movement in bourgeois politics in the U.S., they are helping the right wing win influence. Giving any political credence to the liberal warmakers allows the right wing to be the predominant pressure on the Democratic administration and gives unnecessary victories to the rightists.

The only way to fight Buchananism or Trent Lottism effectively is by opposing Clinton and liberalism uncompromisingly and building a working-class movement that can take the moral high ground and forge a proletarian party that can lead the toilers to take power out of the hands of the warmakers. The struggles by Black farmers against discrimination and for land and the numerous battles by trade unionists, such as the 98-day strike by coal miners who came out stronger through the fight against Freeman in Illinois, are producing a new working-class vanguard with the capacity to achieve this goal.

Impeachment crisis deepens

Continued from Page 10

their guns in opposing Clinton's removal. At the same time the Clinton administration has taken steps to accelerate Washington's militarization drive and to renew proposals for cutting Social Security.

This was revealed in Clinton's announcement of the largest increase in military spending since the administration of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s (see article on page 3). The article in the January 2 *New York Times* reporting this decision, hinted how the White House may use this as part of cutting social programs. "The officials refused to say exactly how Mr. Clinton would propose paying for the increase in military spending," the article said. "He has already vowed not to spend the recent Federal surplus until he and Congress agree on a way to shore up the Social Security system, which is lurching toward insolvency."

In making these moves, Clinton is simply following in the footsteps of hollowed liberal icons who have led a bipartisan foreign policy of war since the 1930s. These include Democratic presidents Franklin Roosevelt who led Washington's entry into the inter-imperialist slaugh-

ter of World War II, Harry Truman under whose administration the Cold War was launched, John Kennedy who organized the invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, and Lyndon Johnson who escalated the war against Vietnam.

The goals of the Democratic Party's foreign policy are the same as the Republicans: to keep as much of the world as possible open for the trade, investment and exploitation that U.S. capitalism needs. But as the world deflationary crisis has accelerated and competition between the main imperialist powers has grown, the disputes among the rulers themselves are getting out of their control.

The current impeachment crisis is deeper than what the bourgeoisie in the United States faced with the Watergate scandal in 1973-74, impeachment proceedings against then-president Richard Nixon, and Nixon's subsequent resignation. That was an attempt to limit the damage to the ruling class by the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and the rise of the struggle for Black freedom in this country. That crisis was under a large measure of control.

This can't be said of the events that have led to Clinton's trial in the Senate. The outcome is not predictable.

Black farmers

Continued from front page

er. I'm not ready to roll over. The same people who took the land from us are still in these offices," said Eddie Slaughter, a Georgia farmer and vice president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA). BFAA scheduled a national meeting for February 20 in North Carolina to map out plans around the lawsuit and future activities.

The outline of the settlement was reported by lawyers for the farmers at three contentious meetings in late October in Selma, Alabama; Pine Bluff, Arkansas and Durham, North Carolina. But no written copy or summary of the deal was presented, at least to the large majority of farmers, prior to the settlement agreement.

The settlement agreement offers Black farmers cash payments of \$50,000, a payment of 25 percent of that to the Internal Revenue Service to cover taxes, and wiping out of debts owed to the USDA. The settlement provides no relief from debt owed to private lenders that farmers obtained when they could not get government loans.

Black farmers who have an active discrimination case or those who file an affidavit that names specific individuals in the USDA who denied them loans will be eligible for the payment. Farmers who claim greater damages will be required to have extensive documentation of discrimination and have to stake their claim on an all or nothing gamble to be decided in a non-appealable arbitrator's decision.

Lawyers for the farmers are awarded a down payment of \$1 million to be paid within 20 days and "reasonable fees, costs and expenses."

Agriculture Secretary Glickman described the settlement as "closing a painful chapter" in USDA history. "We do not admit or deny any of the specific allegations in the lawsuit," he said, "but the fact that we are settling with a significant amount of money does indicate that we believe there is substantial liability."

No actions are to be taken against any of the USDA officials who have carried out the racist discrimination. They will stay in place with the same ability to delay and deny loans to Black farmers. "We'll face the same racist bigots as before in the county agriculture offices, with their hangman's nooses and confederate flags," Gary Grant told a TV reporter in Tillery.

Private creditors will be on the \$50,000 payments "like flies on sugar," as one farmer put it. And even for farmers who do not have much private debt, \$50,000 does not go far in making up for losses from foreclosures and bankruptcies. A new tractor alone can cost \$100,000.

"We're being sold again into slavery," Eddie Slaughter said. "A fair solution would allow me to go into court and present my case. I'm not going to fight this on my own. There is great discontentment from farmers I've talked to in Georgia, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Without a fight, our future is nothing but debt slaves to the USDA."

According to federal statistics, in 1920 some 14 percent of farms in the United States were owned by Blacks. By 1992, the number had plummeted to 18,816 or less than 1 percent. Hundreds of Black farmers filed complaints with the federal government over the past 15 years stating they were routinely denied aid automatically granted to whites. Many times their applications for government aid were rejected with racist remarks.

Over the last several years Black farmers began to organize protests and demand government action. The current stage of the fight by the Black farmers began with a demonstration outside the White House in Washington in December 1996.

After that demonstration the secretary of agriculture, Daniel Glickman, agreed to a temporary moratorium on farm foreclosures against Black farmers claiming discrimination and a series of "listening sessions" were set up in a number of cities in January 1997 to hear reports from farmers about discrimination they suffered. The booklet the USDA published about those "listening sessions," *Civil Rights at the US Department of Agriculture, a report by the Civil Rights Action Team*, confirmed the charges by farmers who are Black, women, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Native American about blatant discrimination against them by the USDA.

Farmers filed two suits against the USDA, *Pigford v. Glickman* and *Brewington v. Glickman*. In September, 1998 a report by the inspector General of the USDA reported that discrimination at USDA was an ongoing problem, even after repeated assurances by Glickman that they were a thing of the past. A month later Federal Judge Paul Friedman certified the plaintiffs as a class, an important victory for the farmers and a blow to the USDA defense.

BFAA activists are available to speak before farmer, union, and community groups. The BFAA can be reached at 252-826-3244 in Tillery, North Carolina.

Stu Singer is a member of United Transportation Union Local 454.

CORRECTION

The article "We will reenlist volunteers, and sign up new ones" — Organizers of project to digitize Pathfinder books assess progress, appeal for help" in the January 11 *Militant* gave the wrong e-mail number to contact to volunteer to help. Those who would like to join or reenlist in any aspect of the project can contact the Pathfinder volunteer reprint project steering committee at ruthchen@flash.net

Strikers rally against latest contract offer by Kaiser Aluminum

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

ON THE PICKET LINE

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

TACOMA, Washington — Braving a record cold snap, more than 100 strikers and their supporters rallied at the Kaiser Aluminum plant here the night of December 22.

The action was in response to the company's latest contract offer, made the previous week. Kaiser now proposes to eliminate 700 union jobs from a nationwide workforce of 3,100. This is almost twice the original threat to get rid of 400 workers. Strikers explain that job cuts is one of the main issues in the strike.

Along with the Kaiser strikers, who are members of the United Steelworkers of America, supporters came from a number of other unions in the Tacoma and Seattle area. They included: Tacoma Longshoremen, members of the International Association of Machinists from Alaska Airlines and Boeing, Teamsters on strike at Jet Tool in nearby Auburn, Service Employee International Union members, rail-

road switchmen from the United Transportation Union, sailors from the Sailors Union of the Pacific, and hotel employees from the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union.

The spirited rally lasted almost two hours. The strikers and their supporters chanted, "No contract no work," "One day longer than Kaiser," and "Scabs go home."

Disney workers ratify twice-rejected contract

MIAMI — Hourly workers at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, approved a new contract December 10 after twice voting it down. The contract vote by members of the Service Trades Council Union ends a two-month long labor dispute with the entertainment giant. This organization is composed of six unions representing some 23,000 laundry workers, housekeepers, culinary, food and beverage workers, animal handlers and specialists, costumed characters and parade performers, lifeguards, bus and monorail drivers, and ride operators.

In November Disney workers twice rejected the recommendation of their union officials to accept Disney's offer of a 30-month contract, which would increase the starting wage from \$5.95 an hour to \$6.25 an hour with workers topping out at \$10.42 an hour after five years. "This offer was a slap in the face," said Duke Derdock, a costume character at Disney-MGM Studios. "It was a great relief that it

failed."

The proposed contract reflected Disney's ongoing campaign to phase out free health insurance, along with free theme-park passes and merchandise discounts. Only one of Disney's five health-care plans would remain free under the new contract. Two plans that had been free would now charge premiums, and two others would double in price.

In addition to the paltry wage increase and health insurance co-payments, many workers who perform as costumed characters opposed provisions that would increase the amount of time in costume while reducing their breaks.

During the negotiations rank-and-file workers staged an informational picket line at Disney World and costumed workers tried to organize a mass sick-out to demonstrate their solidarity, which was not sanctioned by union tops. At least 11 workers from the Animal Kingdom, the Magic Kingdom, and Epcot were fired for strike activities. In 1994 workers at Disney also voted down two concession contracts approved by the union leadership before finally approving one.

After the second contract rejection this year, Disney threatened to withhold retroactive pay raises for workers that were due as of November 1. The company also said it would revoke all pay raises and impose the higher health-care premi-

ums. A week before the third contract vote Disney sent a two-page letter to employees to "encourage you to carefully consider the consequences of your decision for you and your family when you vote." In this context, the new contract passed with 3,676 workers voting in favor and 903 against.

Quebec foundry workers resist company lockout

GRAND-MÈRE, Quebec — The 55 workers at Fonderie Grand-Mère in the city of Grand-Mère, an hour and a half northeast of Montreal, have been locked out by their employer since October 31. The company wants to gut seniority, cut holidays, and take back other gains that workers have gained in previous contracts. "They want to break the union," said local president Roger Vincent. The workers are members of the Union of Grand-Mère Foundry Employees, which is affiliated with the Federation of Democratic Unions — a small union federation in Quebec.

Starting in May the company installed new fences around the plant and brought in security guards. The union was also hit with a court injunction that puts a limit of 11 workers at the entrance to the plant, only eight of whom can be outside the union trailer at the same time.

The company has announced that it plans to demand the same concessions from the 65 workers at the Laperle plant it owns in St. Ours, east of Montreal, Quebec. Workers there are members of the United Steelworkers of America, which is affiliated with the Quebec Federation of Labour — the largest labor federation on Quebec. Union officials from Laperle who visited Grand-Mère said that they expected to be locked-out when their contract expires at the end of December.

Jeff Powers, a member of United Transportation Union Local 845 in Seattle; Bill Kalman in Miami; and Grant Hargrave, member of International Association of Machinists Local 1758 in Montreal, contributed to this column.



Delegates from five locals of United Steelworkers of America on strike against Kaiser and their supporters rally in Pleasanton, California, at corporate headquarters in early December. In addition to holding rallies in Tacoma, Washington, and other centers of the strike, Kaiser workers have been reaching out to others across the country for solidarity.

Militant/Bill Fabyunkey

LETTERS

Disagree on 'Bonapartism'

The recent articles concerning the new governor of Minnesota and his "Bonapartist" politics have been foolish exercises in ultraleft dogmatism.

Reaching back in history to a pre-imperialist era political trend to describe Mr. Ventura is rooted in a narrow, simplistic view of fascism. Fascism is a complex current in imperialist societies in crisis that can have a "left" face as well as a "right-wing" face. It expressed itself as having "socialist" characteristics at times in societies where socialism was popular. In the United States, "left-wing" fascism will naturally bring to the front libertarian slogans along with its nationalism, militarism, and antidemocratic views. As Trotsky so wonderfully described fascism, "...capitalist society is pushing up the undigested barbarism."

Have your *Militant* writers and editors paid attention to Ventura's cultural and emotional message? It is a message of "muscle against everyday politics." It is Mussolini's message "modernized" and "Americanized."

Phillip Amadon
Cincinnati, Ohio

Definition of Bonapartism

On Christmas Eve Jesse Ventura, the Governor Elect of Minnesota, held a press conference to announce the release of a "Jesse Ventura action figure toy." It seems that the self-promoting Mr. Ventura has signed a contract allowing a major toy company to produce and market a tiny plastic copy of himself. Apparently, the manufacturers

also intend to market an equally tiny plastic villain, "Mr. Evil Special Interests Man" for the plastic hero to fight. These action figures are planned for release to toy stores in time for the spring sales season. Whatever we may think of the sort of person, who would lend himself to such a scheme, we should take this as a sign that Bonapartist trends in American politics are not a passing phenomena.

In political discussions with friends and comrades, I have found that few have a very clear notion of what Bonapartism is and perhaps a common definition would simplify future discussion. There is a really precise definition of Bonapartism in Leon Trotsky's pamphlet, *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*: "Bonapartism refers to a form of class rule that is dictatorial in form and is usually headed by an individual appearing as a 'strong man.' Originating in a period of social crisis or stalemate of contending class forces, a Bonapartist regime tends to elevate itself above the country's classes and acquire a certain independence of action."

What is essential in this definition? That Bonapartism is a form of emergency class rule in a period of crisis. That the government is dictatorial in form (i.e. makes law by decree of the executive) and is usually headed by a "strong man." The key element in any Bonapartist government is that it attempts to balance between contending class forces and poses as "above politics." The usual historical role of Bonapartism is to defuse a social crisis by a mixture of repression, concessions and demagoguery and by



forestalling the outbreak of revolution, save the endangered social order.

How is Bonapartism a danger to the working class? Let's think of the central political message of Bonapartist agitation: The workers, the farmers, the oppressed are incapable of freeing themselves and must be rescued by a "hero." Workers, don't strike! Don't fight in your own interests! Above all, don't form your own political party and strike for power! Instead, put your fate, the fate of your class, the fate of your country into the hands of the "tall, gray eyed, man of destiny. The savior of the people...."

True, it is hard to take H. Ross (the Boss) Perot, or his professional wrestling protégé, seriously as heroes. I mean, Perot is this weird little guy with big ears and a squeaky voice.... As far as I know, the wee

man has never been convicted of committing an unselfish or heroic deed in his life. Still, a billion dollars can buy a lot of air time, hire a gang of "spin doctors" and maybe put a plastic action figure into office....

At present, the social crisis may not have developed enough for a classic Bonapartist regime. I don't think we can expect a military coup in Minnesota, the shelling of the state legislature, or the crowning of Emperor Jesse in the local cathedral. Still, we do have a capitalist politician winning high office with the use of Bonapartist rhetoric and that is a warning signal to thinking workers. I somehow find it impossible to believe that a "Reform Party" governor will govern in anyone's interests other than those of the capitalist class.

Roy Inglee
Elsmere, Delaware

Only social revolution will sweep away racism

The last paragraph of the editorial "Defend affirmative action!" in the December 14 *Militant* is misleading. After describing the movement that defeated Jim Crow segregation in the '50's and '60's, the editorial concluded "it is only along this road that a social movement [emphasis added] can be built that will ultimately sweep away the discrimination and racist cancer that are a cornerstone of capitalist society." It is not a powerful protest movement (like the civil rights movement) that will sweep away racist discrimination, but a social revolution where political and economic power are put in the hands of the toilers. "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" [in *New International* no. 11] makes this point succinctly. "In the United States, as in other imperialist countries, 'nation time' and the socialist revolution will triumph together" (p. 240). The experience of the Cuban revolution shows that it will take generations following the victory of a socialist revolution for the last vestiges of racism and discrimination to be "swept away."

Gary Boyers
Detroit, Michigan

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Imperialists threaten to extend their military intervention in Yugoslavia

BY ANNE HOWIE
AND NATASHA TERLEXIS

PRISTINA, Kosova, Yugoslavia — Washington and other imperialist powers have stepped up their threats of military intervention in Yugoslavia. On December 29, NATO secretary general Javier Solana declared, "NATO is ready to intervene if the situation [in Kosova] requires."

The latest threats of intervention follow a renewed offensive by the Belgrade government against the Albanian majority in Kosova. Some 40 government tanks and armored personnel carriers attacked villages in the Podujevo area, in northern Kosova, beginning December 24. This assault, which continued for four days, met resistance from the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK), which is a part of the fight for Kosova's independence from the Yugoslav government in Belgrade. The attacks are occurring in villages severely devastated by the large-scale offensive of Belgrade's military forces in September and October of last year. Roughly half the homes in the now snow-covered hills of the Drenica region, for example are shelled and uninhabitable.

The decades-long struggle of ethnic Albanians in Kosova, who are 90 percent of Kosova's population of 2 million, for national self-determination took on a new urgency when the autonomous status of Kosova was revoked by the Serbian government in 1989.

As they earlier did in Bosnia, the imperialist powers are intervening in order to lay the ground for eventually restoring the domination of capitalism throughout the region of the Yugoslav workers state, and to tighten their encirclement of Russia. But they face the challenge of crushing the resistance waged by Albanian miners and other workers, farmers, and youth in Kosova and throughout the region.

Over the past month, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been putting in place "peace monitors," eventually to number 2,000, as part of the Holbrooke agreement signed between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's president Slobodan Milosevic and U.S. government representative Richard Holbrooke, in October, under threat of NATO air strikes. In a role similar to the "weapons inspectors" in Iraq, the OSCE force is supposed to monitor the withdrawal of government troops and police from Kosova, and to oversee the return of more than 300,000 "internally dis-



Militant photos by Anne Howie
Despite brutal attacks by the Belgrade regime and imperialist intervention in the region, workers in Kosova and rest of Yugoslavia remain obstacle to reimposing capitalist rule. Above, union members at Trepca mine near Mitrovica, who are fighting for self-determination for Kosova and against sell-off of mine to foreign capitalists (see article below). From left, they are Xhafer Nuli, chair of the union at the Trepca mine; union branch secretary Selami Helshani; and unionist Shashevar Begu. Right, house in Drenica, Kosova, that was shelled by government forces.

placed persons" to their homes. NATO is also building a military "extraction" force of 2,000 based in the neighboring Republic of Macedonia, ready to enter Kosova if they decide to pull out the monitors.

After the December 24 attacks, William Walker, the U.S. diplomat who heads the OSCE's team of "peace monitors," stated that "both sides have gone looking for trouble and they have found it."

Up to now, the imperialist intervention has been carried out in the name of defending the rights of the Albanian targets of Milosevic's force. Now an increasing number of "unnamed diplomatic sources" are being cited in the big-business press pointing to the Albanian resistance, and the UCK in particular, as the real problem in Kosova. The Athens weekly *New Europe* quotes an unnamed diplomat involved in the negotiations saying, "Frankly, there's a growing feeling that the UCK is the problem. They are rude, sneering, and uncooperative. I'm personally disgusted with their attitude and with their actions."

French defense minister Alain Richard made similar charges publicly. "The main destabilizing factor today is the rebels, not

the Serbs," he stated January 1, while traveling to Macedonia to review French troops who are there as part of the so-called extraction force. "And if the clashes continue and grow, the accords will no longer be valid and we will have to go back to the threats of military pressure which existed before."

Albanians discuss NATO intervention

Many Albanians these reporters spoke with during a late-December visit to Kosova expected that the now 700-strong OSCE mission would help to protect them. However, the actual conduct of the monitors is beginning to paint a different picture for these fighters on the ground. Halit Baroni, of the Human Rights Council in Mitrovica, an industrial town near the capital Pristina, said so far 36 monitors are in place there. "But the police are still harassing Albanians," he stated. "Every day the police arrest young people." Baroni said the police go looking for youth from the nearby Drenica area, a stronghold of the UCK. "They arrest them, beat them, hold them for two or three days.... Some are held for two or three months with no contact." About 190 youth are currently "wanted" in Mitrovica, of whom 90 so far

have been picked up.

The charges Albanians commonly face today are of participating in or assisting terrorism. Baroni told of a man arrested in Mitrovica while trying to send bread to the village of Skenderaj. He was charged with "assisting the terrorists." Three Albanians from Ferizaj were convicted December 26 of similar charges and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment between them. On the same day the one of the three Albanian-language dailies, *Bujku*, was closed down by the authorities. "We expected a better situation with the OSCE but we're disappointed with the people who are here."

We don't expect anything good from them, we don't know why they're here," Baroni said.

This early experience has also raised questions about the prospect of NATO troops being deployed. "If they act like the OSCE, we have no use for them," commented Baroni.

None of the predominant political parties in Kosova are opposed to NATO intervention in the region. Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of

Kosova (LDK) and president of the Kosovan government, which is not recognized by Belgrade, has repeated his request for a NATO military force in several European capitals in recent weeks.

Likewise, Mehmet Hajrizi, of the United Democratic Movement (LBD), a coalition of parties opposed to Rugova formed three months ago, told the *Militant*, "Only those who support war are opposed to an international presence here." The premier of Albania also stated in the Tirana parliament December 26 that "a NATO action would have been decisive for a peaceful solution of the Kosova problem."

The political leadership of the UCK also calls for NATO support. In a statement released December 25, the UCK General Staff called on "the international community to punish the criminal Belgrade regime." At the same time, the statement called for a lifting of the arms embargo "on the UCK, because only a strong liberation army will force Serbia to respect the cease-fire and pave the way for a just and lasting political solution to the Kosova issue."

Bujar Dugolli, president of the Independent Students' Union of the University of Kosova, stated, "It is not the duty of NATO to get independence for us. But it should

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Workers in Kosova resist sell-off of industry

MITROVICA, Kosova, Yugoslavia — One of the aims of the Belgrade regime has been to sell-off to foreign investors much of the industry in Kosova and throughout the Federated Republic of Yugoslavia. About 49 percent of the Serbian telecommunications system, for example, is now owned by Italian and Greek companies.

In Kosova, however, the trade unions have organized to block the sell-off of mines and other resources. "As a democratic trade union, we don't accept colonialism," said Agim Hajrizi, president of the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosova. "The transformation of property is possible only after a political solution. It can only be sold by the legal government of Kosova." The privatization drive has not been successful, he said, for different reasons. "First, because of the war — it doesn't create good conditions for bringing in capital. Another factor was the union protests. We don't respect any agreement made by the Serbians with other countries. We were collectively dismissed, so we must be collectively returned

[to work]. We are also asking for back wages, pensions and benefits."

"Trepca is our place — we have done everything to fight for it," said Xhafer Nuli, chair of the independent trade union at the Trepca mine, near Mitrovica. He said Dutch, Bulgarian, U.S., Greek, and British investors have all shown interest in buying into the mine. One Greek capitalist concern, the Mytilineos group, has actually bought substantial interest in the Trepca mine and begun some capital investments. Hajrizi sees this as a political move by Belgrade to secure Athens' diplomatic support. The union had appealed to the embassies of these countries not to invest. With the exception of Bulgaria, these governments also have troops participating in the NATO force being prepared in Macedonia.

The union has also tried to inform trade unions in other countries and other parts of Yugoslavia of the situation facing Albanian miners in Kosova. Nuli cited the case of miners from Tuzla in Bosnia, who were sent to work in Trepca after an explosion at their

own mine. The union explained to these workers that the jobs they were working were the jobs of miners sacked for being Albanian — some left straight away. Others left after a while, and since the start of the war, all have now returned to Tuzla.

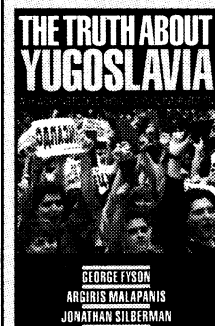
Some investment has begun in Kosova, according to Nuli, since 1997, but the independent trade unions appeal to workers not to take the jobs. "We were offered 500 jobs by Mytilineos in January 1998, but they have not been taken."

The Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosova adopted a resolution at its first congress in 1990 favoring privatization after the fight for self-determination is won. But the sense of ownership of the means of production felt by workers is clear in speaking with the miners of Trepca. "Under socialism, the mine belonged to the workers," Nuli told the *Militant*. "We invested in the mines. We consider them ours. Nearly half the miners had relatives who died in the mine. We have many reasons to claim this mine."

— A.H. AND N.T.

From Pathfinder

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